

SUNDAYS KEPT HOLY;
IN

Moral Reflections, Pious Thoughts,

AND

DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS,

ON THE

G O S P E L S

FOR THE

SUNDAYS from *Easter* to *Advent*.

Being a SUPPLEMENT to the

Christian Advent and Lenten Monitor;

OR, THE

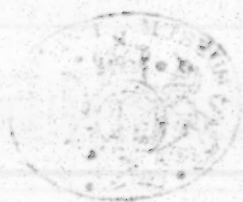
Third Part of Moral Reflections on the
GOSPELS for all the *Sundays* in the Year.

SECOND EDITION.

By P. B. O. S. F.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

HAVING published the *Christian Advent*, and, in the second Edition, added reflections on the Gospels for the *Sundays* from *Christmas* to *Ash-Weãnesday*, or Beginning of *Lent*, as the first Part of Moral Reflections for all the *Sundays* in the Year; the second Part of which is the *Lenten Monitor*, or, Entertainment for *Lent*, reprinted in a new Edition. This third Part, gives reflections, pious Thoughts and devout Aspirations on the *Sundays* from *Easter* to *Advent*; by which the Christian Catholic may be furnished with proper Subjects for his

devout Meditations and Reflection for every *Sunday* in the Year, and which may help him to raise up his Thoughts to God, and assist him in sanctifying the Lord's Day as it ought to be, according to the Precept of God and his Church, commanding us to sanctify and keep this Day holy.

To sanctify the Lord's Day, and to keep it holy is a divine Precept, and an express Command of God, by *Moses*, to the *Jews* in the old Law; and confirmed by Christ in the new Law, or the Gospel. The *Jews* were commanded to keep and sanctify the seventh, or last Day in the Week. Christians keep the first Day, or *Sunday*, and have done so ever since the Apostles Time, by whom the Change was made of the Sabbath from *Saturday* to *Sunday*: Hence we find the Evangelist St. *John*, *Revel.* vi. 1. styles *Sunday*, or the first Day of the Week, the Lord's Day, so called in Memory of Christ's glorious Resurrection on that Day. But, though the Day is changed, the Obligation of keeping it holy and sanctifying it, remains an indispensable Duty on every one, and it ought to be religiously observed in such holy Exercises of Devotion as become the Lord's Day, or a Day holy to the Lord. These Exercises are, devout Prayer, Meditation, reading good Books, assisting at the publick Service of the Church, and hearing Sermons and Exhortations when we have Opportunity of doing it. Thus to observe *Sunday*, is to observe it as a Christian, and
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according to the Intention of its Institution, to consider which will give us a true practical Notion of our Obligation on those Days. Nothing can be more just and reasonable than that some Part of our Time should be dedicated in a peculiar Manner to the Service of our great Creator, who made us to love and serve him in this World, and to be happy with him in the next. God has mercifully indulged us with six Days in the Week to attend to our necessary temporal Concerns, and to the Business of that Station of Life he has placed us in ; but that we might not be so taken up with Sollicitude for the Body, as to neglect the more important Care of our Souls, he has required that one Day in the Week should be set apart for our spiritual Affairs, by Attendance on his publick Worship, and other Acts of Devotion, thereby to acknowledge his sovereign Dominion over us, and our Dependance on him : That we may with more Leisure adore, praise and give him Thanks for his Blessings to us : implore his gracious Assistance, and draw down his Blessing upon us, and all our Labours and Employments. This Appointment of one Day in the Week to be kept holy, is an Effect of his Goodness, particularly to those whose necessary Works and Employments allow them but little Time for Prayer and spiritual Duties on Week Days. Such have Reason to esteem *Sundays*, to be of great Advantage to them, as being prohibited by human, as well as divine Laws, to work or

labour on those Days, they may have some Time and Leisure to provide for their Souls, which they ought to do with as much Care and Diligence as they labour for their Bodies : Nor can they more effectually procure God's Blessing upon themselves, and their honest Labour and Industry on Week Days, than by a devout and religious Observance of the Lord's Day. Nor are They less obliged to this, who by the bountiful Hand of Providence, are exempted from Work and Labour ; and living in Plenty and Abundance, may be said to be their own Masters every Day. They are, certainly, strictly obliged to spend *Sunday* well out of a Principle of Gratitude to God for his Goodness to them, and it is highly criminal in such to neglect and omit the Duties of the Lord's Day, or to make no other Difference between *Sundays* and common Days, than perhaps, to take greater Liberties, and commit greater Excesses on them. Did Christians seriously reflect on the Nature, and Precepts of that holy Religion they profess, they would not make so free with, nor so openly violate the positive Commands of God. Did they consider the strict Account they must, one Day, render of their Time, they, certainly, would spend it better than they generally do, and the Days set apart by God himself for his Worship, would be more carefully observed. But will a Christian say, that he sanctifies the Lord's Day, if he employs himself, or his Servants, in unnecessary servile Work and Labour, contrary to the
express

express Prohibition of Almighty God? Is it sanctifying the *Sunday*, to spend the greatest Part of it in Taverns, Alehouses, Dancing or Gaming? Do they keep it as they ought, who sleep away great Part of the Morning, and spend the rest of the Day in idle and vain Diversions? No, certainly: If they may be said to observe one Part of the Precept: *Thou shalt not work*; do they keep the other Part: *Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day*?

The sincere good Christian, who has the great Affair of his Salvation at Heart, will be very careful to improve his Time, and be glad of Opportunity and Leisure to do it on *Sundays*, in the Service of God, and holy Exercise of Religion. The truly christian Shop-keeper and labouring Man will count it a Happiness that he has one Day of Cessation from Work, and the Business of his Trade. As these employ him every Day in the Week, from Morning till Night, and afford him but little Leisure for religious Duties, he will be glad that on *Sundays* he may, without Interruption, spend some Part of his Time in Devotion, reading good Books and going to Church; that he has Leisure to meditate on the serious and practical Truths of Religion. To observe *Sunday* in this pious and religious Manner, what Blessings may not the Tradesman or the working Man hope to obtain of God upon his Industry and Labour! By this Method he sanctifies not only the Lord's Day, but the whole Week, and consecrates in a Manner,

a'll his Labour to God. While such work hard for this World, they are, at the same Time labouring for Heaven, and eternal Happiness, which will be their Recompence. But it must cause melancholy Reflections, to see poor labouring Men sweating and toiling all the Week, under their Drudgery to gain a poor Subsistence in this World; to live miserably here, and to run an eminent Hazard of being for ever miserable hereafter, by their scandalous and wicked Profanations of the Lord's Day.

Nor is it a less Subject of melancholy Reflections to see so many of those, who, by the Bounty of Providence, are distinguished from and raised above others, by elevated Station, Rank and Fortune; who enjoy all the Comforts and Amusements of Life in Plenty and Abundance, that they should be so forgetful of their Duty, and the Gratitude they owe to God, as to be equally and often more guilty of ill-spending the *Sundays*, than those of an inferior and lower Rank. Such having it in their Power to amuse and divert themselves every Day, and when done with Moderation, and innocently, is no way culpable: such, I say, ought to consider, how just and reasonable it is that they dedicate God's holy Days to his Service, and thereby set good Example to their Inferiours and Domesticks. Nothing recommends Virtue and Piety with more Efficacy than good Example, especially of those of superiour Station; and, on the contrary, nothing has a
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more pernicious Effect than their bad Example. If the Quality and Gentry neglect the Duties of Religion, and spend the *Sundays* in Sloth and Idleness, in vain Diversions and Amusements, the lower Class of People will think themselves authorized to copy after them. This is the Cause of so many Disorders and Irregularities in Families, and productive of the great Corruption of Morals in the Generality of Christians, who if they accustomed themselves religiously to observe the Lord's Day, we might hope to see Virtue triumph over Vice, and Christians to live as such, and conformable to their Character.

But while I thus urge and enforce a due Sanctification of the Lord's Day, it may, perhaps, be asked: Is no Relaxation of the Spirits to be allowed? No Diversion to be taken on a *Sunday*? Who can pray and read all Day long? Is not this to screw the Gospel too high, and to oblige us to a *Jewish* and *Pharisaical* Observance of the Christian Sabbath? To this I reply: Far be it from me to stretch the Commands of God further than he intended; or to oblige Christians to a *Jewish* Observance. No: it is not necessary to pray all Day long, or to be poring over a good Book from Morning till Night, nor to run to one Sermon, and from that to hear another, or a third or a fourth. This is not required. To attend to the Intention of God's Command to keep holy the Lord's Day, will be a good and sure Guide to us how to observe it, by letting

the mentioned Exercises of Devotion have a proper Share of our Time on those Days, the Duties of which religiously performed, I see no Harm then to take some moderate, suitable and innocent Diversion. This may be more particularly allowed to those whose constant Labour allow no Time for it in the Week ; who are obliged to work hard, and attend to their Business from *Monday* Morning till *Saturday* Night ; but then it is absolutely necessary to take Care, that under this Notion such do not abuse and profane the Lord's Day by sinful and criminal Diversions. These Diversions, if taken, must be perfectly innocent, and suitable to the sanctity of the Day ; nor too much Time be spent in them ; nor spiritual Duties be postponed, or omitted for them. As for the better Sort of People, the Quality, Gentry and rich Tradesmen, they have no such Necessity to plead, and may, without any Prejudice to themselves, put a prudent Restraint upon their Diversions on a *Sunday*, and be very moderate and cautious in them. Hence if, after Morning and Evening Service regularly and devoutly attended to, their private Prayers, and spiritual Reading observed, a sober private Set may be allowed, it can no Ways be suitable to the Sanctity of the Lord's Day to have *Routs* and great Company as at other Times ; to keep publick Assemblies, and to invite every one to come and trifle away their precious Time and their Money : To make *Sundays*, instead, as God designed it, a Day of Rest for their
Servants

Servants and Domesticks, to be a Day of as much, or more Work and Employ for them than on other Days; when their whole Time must be employed in preparing for a grand Dinner, or to dispose every Thing for a great *Route* in the Evening. What Time have Servants so employed for Prayer and Devotion? Are they not obliged to keep holy the Lord's Day? Yes; and if hindered by their Masters and Mistresses, these must answer for it. This may seem to some a *hard Saying*: *Who can bear it?* St. John vi. But as it is no more than what God delivers in his holy Word, and what his Church teaches, I know of no Exemption Quality, or Station gives from observing it. I am sure it will be allowed by all serious good Christians who will rather chuse to be directed in Points of such Importance by these sure Guides, than by ill Custom, Company, or bad Practice, though recommended by Number and Fashion.

Supposing, therefore, the serious Christian convinced of his Duty to spend the Lord's Day well, and as he ought, any Help to that, will, doubtless, meet with a favourable Reception from him; and the Approbation of such is only desired. The following moral Reflections on the *Sundays* from *Easter* to *Advent*, and those in the first and second Part of this Work are published, with this View, and for that End: To furnish Matter for pious Meditation and Reading: To raise up the Mind to God, and to regulate our private Devotions according to the Spirit and Intention
of

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of the Church, in her publick Offices. Nothing can be more proper for this than the sacred Word of God read to us in the Gospels assigned for the different *Sundays* in the Year. The practical Truths they contain deserve our most serious Attention; and, as for what is contained in these Reflections on them, they are with all Humility and sincerity submitted to the Judgment of the Church, and that of my Superiors, by

P. B. O. S. F. A. D. 1772.



LOW

LOW SUNDAY;

O R

First SUNDAY after EASTER.

THIS first *Sunday* after *Easter*, or the Octave of that solemn Festival, is variously stiled. Anciently it was, and at present, in the Missal and *Breviary*, it is called *Dominica in Albis*, or the *Sunday in White*, from a Custom observed in the primitive Church, of the Catechumens, or newly baptized laying aside their white Garments, which, after publick Baptism, on *Easter-Eve*, they wore till this Day. It is also frequently stiled *Dominica Quasimodo*, from the first Words of the *Introit* of the Mass said this day. Here, in *England*,
it

it is generally called *Low Sunday*, as being the lowest, or latest Day, allowed for making our Paschal Communion.

The G O S P E L, St. *John* xx. 19.

Now when it was late the same Day, the first of the Week, and the Doors were shut, where the Disciples were gathered together, for Fear of the *Jews*, *Jesus* came and stood in the Midst, and said to them : Peace be to you. 20. And when he had said this, he shewed them his Hands and his Side. The Disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. 21. He said therefore to them again : Peace be to you. As my Father hath sent me, I also send you. 22. When he had said this : he breathed on them ; and he said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost. 23. Whose Sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them : and whose Sins you shall retain, they are retained. 24. Now *Thomas*, one of the Twelve, who is called *Didymus*, was not with them when *Jesus* came. 25. The other Disciples therefore said to him : We have seen the Lord. But he said to them : Except I see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Place of the Nails, and put my Hand into his Side, I will not believe. 26. And after eight Days, again his Disciples were within, and *Thomas* with them. *Jesus* cometh, the Doors being shut, and stood in the Midst, and said : Peace be to you. 27. Then he saith to
Thomas :

Thomas: Put in thy Finger hither, and see my Hands, and bring hither thy Hand, and put it into my Side, and be not faithless but believing. 28. *Thomas* answered and said: My Lord and my God. 29. *Jesus* saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, *Thomas*, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. 30. Many other Signs also did *Jesus* in the Sight of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book. 31. But these are written, that you may believe that *Jesus* is the Christ the Son of God: And that believing you may have Life in his Name.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

From what we read in the Gospel of this Sunday concerning our Blessed Lord's appearing to his Disciples, and his shewing the Wounds in his Hands and Side, to St. *Thomas*, reproving him for his Incredulity, we may draw many useful and practical Instructions. And, as it is for our Instruction that the Church reads to us these Portions of Scripture for the Gospels, in her publick Liturgy, every Sunday, we ought devoutly to attend to, and seriously reflect on them. The sacred Word of God, thus read to us, is that divine Seed he sows in our Hearts; and our Duty is, so properly and well disposed to attend to it, that it may prove Seed sown in good Ground, and, as such, spring up, and bring forth Fruit in a holy Life and Conversation; which it will not fail

fail to do, if we seriously attend to, and carefully observe the Instructions here given to us.

Our Blessed Saviour, after his Resurrection, appeared to his Disciples, who were assembled together in a House, but with the Doors shut for Fear of the *Jews*, apprehensive of their Resentment, and that they might be seized upon as Followers of *Jesus Christ*, and be treated as he had been. Amidst these their Fears and Apprehensions Christ appeared, and entered among them, the Doors being shut. The Disciples were glad, says the Evangelist, when they saw the Lord. His Presence instantly dissipated all their Frights and Apprehensions. Seeing him, their Hearts were filled with Comfort and Consolation. He saluted them with, *Peace be to you*. As if he would have said: Fear not, I am with you. Let your Hearts be at Rest, and your Minds in Peace. Fear not the *Jews*; fear not your Enemies; they cannot, shall not hurt you, but when, and as I shall permit them for your Good, that by your Sufferings for me, you may come to reign with me in eternal Glory. *Peace be to you*.

Nothing is so charming and amiable as Peace. Nothing more to be desired even in this World. Nothing, on the contrary, is more dreadful than Strife and Contention, which sets, not only private Families, but whole Kingdoms and Nations in Flames; oftentimes to their utter Destruction, and the
Loss

Loss of thousands of Souls. That Strife and Contention should spring up, and cause this dreadful Havock, among Heathens, those who know not God, and are Strangers to the christian Religion is less to be wondered at. But, that the same dreadful Effects, proceeding from the same unhappy Cause, should so frequently, as it does, appear among Christians, is truly deplorable, and justly to be wondered at. To behold those, who profess themselves Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, to tear one another in Pieces, as it were, to endeavour to ruin one another by their mutual Animosities, Strifes and Contentions, is amazing. Such forget their own Character. Such forget the positive Command of Christ, to love one another: *and to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* Such have too much Reason to apprehend, that they will be, one Day, rejected by Christ, with, *I know you not, depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity,* St. *Matt.* xxv. Christians of this turbulent, quarrelsome Disposition, and who will not live in Peace with their Neighbours, can claim no Share in that Peace which Christ here gives to his Disciples; nor will ever be owned by him, as his Children and Followers.

But, if Peace in this World, or with one another is so valuable and desirable; there is another Peace, and which would greatly tend to procure and maintain it. This is the Peace of a good Conscience, and may be called the Peace of God, and which Christ here gives to his

his Apostles, and which, as St. Paul testifies, *passeth all Understanding*, Phil. iv. *Peace I leave to you : My Peace I give to you ; not as the World giveth, do I give unto you*, St. John xiv. This is a true, solid and real Peace. That which the World gives is but a false deceitful Peace. It says, *Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace*. Jerem. vi. Hence Holy Scripture compare Worldlings and Sinners to the raging Sea. *Isaias lvii*. They are never at Rest, tossed about continually by the Waves of various criminal and disordered Passions. And the sacred Oracles assure us, that *there is no Peace to the Wicked*, *Isaias xlvi*.

On the contrary, the Just, those who are true Disciples and Followers of *Jesus Christ*, they enjoy the Happiness of a profound Tranquility, a Peace, which the World cannot give, nor take away from them. The good Christian only is blessed with true Peace. He is at Peace with God, being in his Grace and Favour : At Peace with himself in the quiet Comfort of a good Conscience ; and with all the World, hurting no one, wishing ill to no Creature, but doing good to every one, according to his Power, and wishing well to all. What a Blessing ! what Happiness thus to live in Peace, to die with Comfort, and thereby, to be eternally happy hereafter ! Christians ! let us endeavour to acquire and maintain this blessed Peace, by loving God and our Neighbour. Let us banish all Strife and Discord, and labour to preserve a Conscience void of Offence

Offence in the Sight both of God and Man. In the Sight of God, by flying from Sin, and all Occasions of it. In the Sight of Man, injuring no one, and doing good to all. Then shall we share in that Peace Christ gave to his Apostles, shew ourselves his true Children, Sons of him who is the *Prince of Peace*, *Isaia* ix.

A further useful and necessary Instruction may be drawn from the Behaviour of *St. Thomas*, and his Answer to his Fellow Disciples. They told him they had seen the Lord, to which he replied: *Except I shall see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Place of the Nails, and put my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.* Strange Incredulity and Obstinacy! In this Behaviour of *St. Thomas* we may behold a Spirit of Singularity; a great Prevention of Judgement, and a positive adhering to his own Notions, with a wretched Weakness in making his Senses the only Judge of the Things of God. His Singularity appears in his leaving the Company of the other Apostles, and not being with them when our Saviour came and appeared to them. He shewed also his great Prevention of Judgement when the Disciples had told him, they had seen the Lord; without examining or enquiring into the Circumstances of his appearing to them: He peremptorily answered: *Non credam. I will not believe.* He persisted in this Resolution, demanding to have an ocular Demonstration, and the Testimony of his Senses.

Senses. In this Conduct of the Apostle are represented, in a just Light, those who will assent to nothing but what they see, and make Sense and human Reason the supreme Judge of the Mysteries of Religion. From whence we may observe how dangerous the Spirit of Singularity is, when given Way to. It is that which has produced all those Errors and Heresies, which have, from Time to Time, sprung up in the Church. The Authors and Broachers of new Opinions imagine, that to be singular is to shew more Learning and Judgement than others. That they shall be more esteemed for saying that which no Body else ever said ; and to contradict, and deny what every one else believes and affirms, and hence appropriate to themselves the specious fine Character of Free-thinkers, Men of strong Sense, Freedom of Thought, and an unbounded Liberty, thereby to be distinguished from others, whom, in Scorn they stile the credulous Vulgar. How contrary is this from that humble Docility of Spirit, Christ instructs us in by his Answer to this doubting Apostle ! *Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed : Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.* The humble, sincere Christian will captivate his Understanding to the Obedience of Faith, and desire no other Proof than the Authority of God's holy Word, as delivered by the Church. This gives true Peace and Tranquility, a firm Confidence not to be shaken, and shews we are truly wise. Let us then carefully avoid
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all Singularity, all Conceit of ourselves, and our own private Judgement, liable, alas ! to a thousand Mistakes, fallible and easy to be deceived. Our Duty is to submit to God's holy Catholick Church, and to be directed by her, and her Pastors, of whom Christ has said : He that hears you, hears me ; and he that despises you, despises me, St. *Luke xv.* That we might safely rely upon the Church's Authority, he promised, and has sent his holy Spirit to lead and guide her into all Truth, and is, and will be with her to the End of the World. Hence springs that happy Security, and Peace of Mind to be enjoyed by relying upon her, and living in her Communion : While all, who separate from her are divided among themselves, and lose their Way in the Darknes of Errour and Unbelief.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Thy Peace, O my God ! is truly charming and desiræable. The World knows nothing of it : Nor can They ever experience it, who abandon thee, to hunt after vain Satisfactions in sinful wordly Pleasures. Let me not do so, O thou true Repose and Happiness of my soul ! Draw my Heart and Affections from the World and its Vanities, that I may adhere only to thee. Fill my Heart and my Soul with those sweets Delights which thou hast for those
who

who love thee, and unite me, sweetest *Jesus*, unite me inseparably to thee. May I continue faithful to thee, and not by my own Fault deprive myself of that blessed Peace thou offerest to me. Ah, my God ! my dearest Lord ! is there any Thing that can be put in Competition with thee ? Is there any Thing that can make me happy, or give me true Peace out of thee ? Ah no ; the World, and every Thing in it, is nothing but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. But, thou art all Joy and Comfort, and true Peace is only to be had in thee.

O *Jesus*, my Lord and my God ! shall I presume ever to question, or refuse to believe thy sacred Truths ? Deliver me, O Lord, from so great a Boldness. Let me never be carried away by Singularity, and a Conceit of myself, so as to set myself up for a Judge in Opposition to that Authority thou hast established. My God ! thy Power, like thy Love, is infinite, and past my Comprehension. I adore, and submit to thee, my Lord, and my God. I believe all that you hast revealed, and require no other Proof than thy sacred Word. Thou art Truth itself, and the highest, greatest Veracity. Thou canst not deceive, nor be deceived. I adore thy infinite Goodness in revealing thy Truths to the Little Ones, and hiding them from the Wise Ones of the World, who would measure the Truth of every Thing by the
wretched

First Sunday after Easter.

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wretched Rule of their own narrow Conceptions. I will captivate my Understanding to the Obedience of Faith, and will believe and adore thee, my Lord and my God.

Second

Second *SUNDAY* after *Easter*.

The G O S P E L, St. *John* x. 11.

I A M the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his Life for his Sheep. 12. But the Hireling and he that is not the Shepherd, whose own the Sheep are not, seeth the Wolf coming, and leaveth the Sheep, and flieth : And the Wolf catcheth and scattereth the Sheep. 13. And the Hireling flieth, because he is a Hireling ; and he hath no Care for the Sheep. 14. I am the good Shepherd ; and I know mine, and mine know me. 15. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father : And I lay down my Life for my Sheep. 16. And other Sheep I have that are not of this Fold : Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my Voice, and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd.

R E-

R E F L E C T I O N S.

How great is the Love which Christ here expresses for his Sheep! With how much Reason and Justice does he call himself the good Shepherd! In every Place of Scripture, he uses so many courting and endearing Expressions of Love to us, and shews such a Desire that we should love him, as would incline us to think, that it was his own Interest, and not ours that caused him thus to invite us to love and serve him: That he stood in Need of our Love, and could not be happy without us. He is, indeed, our sovereign Lord and Master, the supream Monarch of Heaven and Earth. We are no more than his Creatures, the Work of his Hands, and on whom we entirely depend. Yet, he is pleased to assume those engaging Titles of Parent, Brother and Friend, that so we may be moved to love him, and have a Confidence in him. In the Gospel of this Day, he styles himself a Shepherd, and to shew how good a one he is, he says, that he lays down his Life for his Sheep; that he loves them so tenderly, as to be willing to suffer Death for them. This he did upon the Cross, dying in the most painful and ignominious Manner for us his Sheep, and to save us from the Jaws of the infernal Wolf; to free us from Sin and Death, and to make us eternally happy. What Excess of Love this! Does it not deserve a Return of Love? Can we do

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too

too much for him, or, shall we not love him again? Ought we not to own this good Shepherd, to hear his Voice and follow him? Yes, certainly. Let us do so, and not prove ungrateful to him.

From what Christ says of himself, that he is the good Shepherd, and from the Distinction he makes between a good Shepherd and a Hireling, every Christian may take Occasion to reflect upon, and examine his own Conduct with Respect to the Station he bears in the World. Christ is the universal Shepherd, or Pastor of the Sheep, and every one who is in the Fold of his Church belongs to him; yet under him, every Christian may be considered as a Pastor or Shepherd, especially with Regard to those who may be under or subject to him. Thus Kings and Princes are, and ought to shew themselves Pastors or Shepherds of their People and Subjects. Prelates and Pastors as to the Souls committed, by God, to their Care. Parents of their Children and Masters and Mistresses in Relation to their Servants and Domesticks. All such are indispensibly obliged to shew themselves good Shepherds in the due and proper Care they take of those committed to their Charge. Princes then shew themselves truly Fathers and Shepherds of their People, when they govern them with Mildness, Justice and Equity: When they take Care that the Laws, especially those against Vice and Immorality, are duly observed, and administer Justice impartially to every one. Prelates

lates and Pastors shew they are good Shepherds of their Flock, when they attend diligently to their spiritual Functions, and are careful to nourish the Souls committed to their Care, by the spiritual Food of sound orthodox Doctrine, preaching the Word of God frequently and with a true disinterested Zeal for the Good of Souls, and endeavour to enforce what they deliver from the Pulpit by their own Practice in an exemplary Life and Conversation. Parents, as such, are likewise Shepherds, and their Children are the Flock committed to their Charge. But if Parents take no Care of their Childrens Education, to breed them up in the Fear of God, and a Knowledge of their Duty, they are far from being good Shepherds, and may be truly called Hirelings, who take no Care of the Sheep. The same is to be said of Masters and Mistresses who neglect to see that their Servants mind their Duty to God: Who set them bad Example, and thereby encourage them in Vice and Immorality. In a Word, all who have others under their Care may here learn their Duty, and the strict Obligation they lie under to acquit themselves of it, as they desire to prove themselves good Shepherds and not Hirelings.

Besides these particular Stations which thus constitute the Christian a Shepherd, with Regard to those committed to his Charge, every Man is a Pastor, or Shepherd, and has, at least, one Sheep committed to his Care, and

that is, his own Soul, which he ought to preserve, even with the Loss of his Life; otherwise he will prove himself a Hireling, and no good Shepherd. The Hireling, says Christ, sees the Wolf coming, and flies away, and abandons the Sheep to the Fury of the ravenous Beast who devours them. Alas! how many are there who abandon their Souls and leave them an easy Prey to the Devil, that infernal Wolf? That is, when any Danger threatens, when any Loss of Profit or Pleasure is to be incurred by acting like a Christian, then our Duty is omitted, for Fear of this Danger, or to prevent this Loss. The poor Soul is left, and the Devil gets Possession of it by Sin. But such Hirelings must expect the Punishment due to their Infidelity and Breach of Trust; and will see their Folly when it is too late to retrieve it. Ah, Christians! Is not this too often our Case? Do we not thus abandon our poor Souls to the Wolf; to Temptations, and take no Care to preserve them by a vigorous and generous Resistance? Nay, do we not too often even refuse those Helps God offers to us; his Grace, and the Means to obtain it, Prayer and the holy Sacraments. Thus we shew ourselves to be Hirelings by our Conduct, and yet the Sheep may be truly said to be our own which we thus neglect. Every Man's Soul belongs to him, and is the better Part of him. What Excuses then, can any one make, if he wilfully neglects what is so much his Interest to preserve? But Neglect, perhaps, is not our only Crime.

Crime. We are not only negligent in resisting Temptations when they come; we too often seek them, by putting ourselves in those Occasions which produce them. Strange Perverseness, thus to run into Danger, and expose ourselves to be lost, and this wilfully! What Account will such, one Day, be obliged to give of themselves? A very dreadful one, if not prevented by Repentance and Amendment.

Let us further consider what Christ says of his Sheep. *I know mine, and mine know me*; not only by a speculative Knowledge, or Faith in him, but by a practical Observance of his holy Commands. Thus they hear his Voice and follow him. To believe in Christ; to be Members of his holy Catholick Church, entitles us to be of his Fold, and to be his Sheep. This necessarily obliges us to hearken to his Voice speaking to us, and not to hearken to the Voice of Strangers seeking to draw us from him. We must not hearken to the Voice of the World enticing us into the broad Way of Sin. We must not give Ear to the Suggestions of the Flesh and corrupt Nature, to leave the narrow Way of the Gospel, to walk in the seeming pleasant but deceitful Paths of sensual Pleasures and criminal Enjoyments, and thereby precipitate ourselves into the Jaws of the Devil, a Wolf watching to devour us. Christians! Let us detest and abhor all the loose and sinful Maxims of the World. Let us follow Jesus Christ the only good and true Shepherd of our Souls. This is truly to know him, and

thereby we shall be known by him, who will acknowledge us to be his true Sheep, and to belong to his Flock ; and will conduct us to his rich and heavenly Pastures, abounding in all Delights, where there will be for ever one Fold and one Shepherd. While those who foolishly follow the crooked Paths of sinful worldly Pleasures, find nothing but a wretched barren Pasture, affording nothing but poor, dry and bitter Herbs ; dry, void of all comfortable Juices, and solid Nourishment ; bitter in their Taste or present Enjoyment ; more bitter in the fatal Consequences they will produce. These are moral Instructions given us in the Gospel of this *Sunday*, and regarding Points of the utmost Importance to us, justly deserve our most serious Attention ; and may help us to make a wise Choice, to shew ourselves true Sheep of *Jesus Christ*, by hearing his Voice, and following him. To prove that we are good Shepherds with Regard to those under our Charge, and to ourselves by the due Care we take to save our own Souls.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Jesus, the true Shepherd and Pastor of Souls ! What Love and Kindness hast thou shewn to us ! All the Labours of thy Life, O Lord, were undergone for our Sake ; and all thy Pains and Torments were endured for our Good. Thou didst suffer, and we reap the Benefit of it. Thou didst lay down thy Life for us thy Sheep, that we might live for ever happy with thee. Dearest Saviour, how excessive is thy Goodness ! Why so much Bounty to us, who so little deserve it ? Why, but that thou may'st manifest thy Goodness above our Demerit ; and by an Effect of matchless Love make us eternally happy ? What shall I render to thee, O Life of my Soul ! what Returns can I make to so much Bounty ? Shall I not love thee, my adorable Redeemer ! Shall I not love thee again, who hast so loved me ? May daily and hourly Aspirations of sincere, reciprocal Love and Affection ascend from my Heart. May I daily shew a grateful Sense of thy Favours, by daily endeavouring to love thee more and more.

O Jesus, the good Shepherd, and truly so ! Thou hast given to me my Soul, that I should take Care of it, as a Sheep purchased with the Price of thy Precious Blood. Let me not be as a Hireling, careless and negligent of what thou hast committed to my Charge. It is my own Sheep likewise, for it is my better Part,

and if I lose it, I shall be for ever miserable. Ah my God! with shame and Confusion, I acknowledge that I have often been careless and negligent: That I have fled away when I have beheld the Wolf coming, nor have resisted as I ought. Make me, dear Lord, more careful, for the Time to come. Give me Prudence to be careful and solicitous for what is my own, and so much my Interest to preserve. Inspire me with Courage and Resolution to resist the Enemies of my Soul, and, by thy Grace, enable me to overcome them.

Third *SUNDAY* after *Easter*.

The G O S P E L, St. *John* xvi. 16.

A Little while, and now you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me; because I go to the Father. 17. Then some of his Disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while and you shall see me; because I go to the Father. 18. They said therefore: What is this that he saith: A little while? We know not what he speaketh. 19. And *Jesus* knew that they had a Mind to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you enquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me; and again, a little while, and you shall see me. 20. Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the World shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful; but your

Sorrow shall be turned into Joy. 21. A Woman when she is in Labour, hath Sorrow, because her Hour is come: But when she has brought forth the Child, she remembreth no more the Anguish, for Joy that a man is born into the World. 22. So also you, now indeed, have Sorrow, but I will see you again, and your Heart shall rejoice; and your Joy no Man shall take from you.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

Those Words of our Blessed Saviour, in this Gospel, *A little while, and you shall not see me; and again, a little while and you shall see me*, are no less instructive than mysterious; and represent to us the Shortness of our Life and the small Duration of it. Here, and while we live in this World, we do not see Christ otherwise than by Faith; but, a little while, and we shall both see and enjoy him, and be happy with him for ever in Heaven, if we do not ourselves hinder it. Comfortable and instructive Reflection to the good Christian! and will stir him up to be careful wisely to improve every Moment of his short Life, which is truly short, but a very little Time in Respect of Eternity, and in the Sight of God, with whom a thousand Years are but as one Day. Hence, St. *James* iv. compares this Life to a Vapour or Smoke, which appears and vanishes in a Moment; nor is the longest Life upon Earth any more. How many are there, who
end

end their Lives, almost as soon as they began them, the Distance between their Cradle and their Grave being but a few Days, Weeks, or Months. Some grow up, and in the Flower of their Age die, and truly find Life to be but a very little while. Alas ! Nothing is so short as Time, nor so soon passes away. A Bird on the Wing ; an Arrow out of a Bow, a Ship under full Sail, are not half so swift as Time, which continually passes, even while we think or speak it. While we pronounce this little Word, *Time*, so much of our Time is gone. When it comes to an End, how little, very little will it then appear to have been. All the Time since the Creation of the World, and till its final Dissolution, is a meer Modicum, a little While, Nothing, in Comparison of Eternity. This Reflection ought to make us careful to employ it well ; for although Time be thus short, yet, if well improved, it will gain for us a happy Eternity. How precious then ought we to esteem it ! How careful not to squander it away in Sin and Folly ! When it is once passed it cannot be recalled. We shall never be able to recover, or call back one Moment. It is a certain Truth, the Moments of our Life are numbered. Our whole Term is but a very little Time, and decreases every Minute. An Hour ago, we had so much the longer to live than we have at present, and an Hour hence we shall have so much less. Christians think seriously of this,
and

and resolve henceforward to make a good Use of your Time.

We may further consider that our Blessed Saviour, in this Gospel, points out the different Lots of his Disciples, in this Life, and those of the World. Speaking to his Apostles, he says: You shall weep and lament, but the Word shall rejoice. To suffer then is the Christian's Portion here ; for what Christ said to his Apostles, he says to all Christians. It is that Legacy he has left to all his Disciples and Followers, and such, as Christians, we are ; nor must we murmur or repine at it. To suffer is to be like him, who chose to suffer upon Earth. His whole Life, from his humble Birth in the Stable of *Bethlehem*, to his dying on Mount *Calvary*, was one continual Series of Sufferings. In what Poverty did he come into the World ! What Hardships did he undergo while in it, and with what Torments and cruel Pains did he go out of it ! It behoved Christ to suffer, and so enter into his Glory, *St. Luke xxiv.* and shall we, who call ourselves his Disciples, think to be exempted ? This would be grossly to deceive ourselves. There is no going to Heaven, but by the Way of the Cross ; nor can we expect to be crowned, unless we manfully fight : If we desire to reign with Christ hereafter, we must be content to suffer with him here. No Saint, or Servant of God, ever was, or ever will be who has not tasted, or shall not taste this bitter Cup. We are mistaken, if we imagine, we
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can be true Members of a Head crowned with Thorns ; and will ourselves wear nothing but Roses. Let us not entertain a Thought so unworthy of our Christian Profession ; but rather with *St. Paul*, glory in the Cross of Christ, that is in suffering according to the holy Will of God, and as he shall please to appoint, who orders all Things for the best, and for the greater Good of those who love him.

The World, indeed, says Christ, *shall rejoice*. What then ? Let not that trouble us. Worldlings and Sinners may rejoice here for a little while, vainly pleasing themselves with the transitory Pleasures, Riches and Honours of this Life ; but as they are not true, only counterfeit Goods, they only afford a false and seeming Joy, and this for a *Modicum*, a short Time, which will soon end, soon be over, and the Scene be sadly changed ; when their Joy will be turned into Sorrow, and their Laughter into Weeping. We have no Reason then to envy such or to think them happy. They rather deserve our Tears and Compassion. If we judge of Things only by Appearance, and behold the World through those false Optick Glasses corrupt Nature presents, no Wonder the World appears all beautiful and amiable ; that its Pleasures and Delights strike us with Desire of obtaining and cause us to rejoice in the Possession of them. But if we consider the World as it really is, and in a Christian Light, how different

ferent will it then appear! How vain and empty are all its Honours! its Riches how deceitful, and its Pleasures, how transitory and short-lived! This Consideration will induce us to make a wise Choice, and prefer the Service of God, though attended with Crosses and Sufferings, to that of the World, with all its seeming Mirth and Jollity.

As a further and powerful Motive to this, we may consider the different Ends, of the Disciples of Christ, and those of the World. If we follow Christ, though we weep and lament here, and for a little while, our Sorrow will soon be turned into Joy. *I will see you again, and your Hearts shall rejoice, and your Joy no one shall take from you,* says Jesus Christ to his Apostles, and in them to us. All the Sorrow and Trouble we meet with in this World will soon have an End. And as the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this Life are truly short, and of an uncertain Duration, so are the Miseries and Afflictions of it. Death, ~~and~~ perhaps sooner than we imagine, will put an End to all Sufferings. Our most cruel Enemies cannot carry their Malice beyond the Grave. Their utmost Power extends no further than this short Life, for Death puts us out of their Reach, and renders them unable to hurt or afflict us more. The most violent and excruciating Pains cease by Death; and the greatest Poverty and Hardship ends with our Lives, after which our Sorrow shall be turned into Joy. Our Miseries and Afflictions will

will be succeeded by an eternal and never-ending Happiness. Of this comfortable Truth St. Paul thus assures us: *Our Tribulation, which at present, is momentary and light, worketh in us above Measure, an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. a Glory lasting and permanent, without Change or Fear of losing it. Our Joy, then, no one shall take from us. An eternal Joy to be for ever possessed and without the least Interruption, and never, never to end. Hence our Blessed Lord says to his Disciples, encouraging them willingly to suffer; *Be glad and rejoice, because your Reward will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven*, St. Matt. v. This Reward is not far off, a few Years, perhaps a few Months or Days may put us in Possession of it. A little while and again you shall see me. Let us have a little Patience, and hold out to the End, which draws nigh, and we shall enter into and possess this Joy.

But not so the Followers of this World; their present temporary Joy shall be turned into lasting Sorrow, eternal Misery and Woe. For their short transitory and sinful Delights, which they so eagerly seek, and are so fond of here, they shall be punished with eternal Grief. Hence holy Job says of them: *They lead their Lives in Mirth and Jollity; and in a Moment descend into Hell*, Job. xxi. where their Laughter will be turned into Mourning, and all their joyous Mirth and Merriment be drowned in fruitless ~~and~~ Tears. Sad Conclusion

sion of a sinful worldly Life ! Where will then be, O foolish and unthinking Sinners ! Where will then be all your sensual Pleasures ! All are past. All fled and gone away, leaving you nothing but the most cruel and cutting Regret and a miserable too late Repentance. What a Difference between the End of the Servants of God, and those of the World ! The Enjoyments of one end in Torments ; and the Sorrow and Grief of the other in eternal Glory. *O that Men were wise, that they would understand and would provide for their latter End !* says holy *Moses*, Deut. xxxii. If we would seriously reflect on these great Truths of the Gospel what Comfort should we find from them, in all our Miseries and Afflictions ! This Thought would make us suffer with Patience and Resignation to the Will of God ; since our Sorrow will be turned into Joy, and our Joy no one shall take from us : And if the Troubles and Sufferings of this World are the sure Way to Heaven and eternal Happiness, that Happiness is a Reward worth all our Pains, and will be a sufficient Recompence for all the Sufferings and Miseries of this World.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

How precious ! how valuable is Time ! Nothing in the World is so estimable. Without Time all other Things are nothing. All the Honours and Riches of the Universe are truly nothing to those who have no Time to enjoy them ;

them; who come into the World, and go out of it almost as soon as they are born. O my God, the bountiful Author and Giver of Time, make me to comprehend, and understand the true Value of those precious Moments thou art pleased to bestow upon me. Great is thy Goodness, dear Lord, to bear with me, and daily to allow me Time to prepare for Eternity. May I never abuse this Bounty by an ill Use of my Time.

O my God, and my All! God of my Life! Let me not experience the sad End of unhappy Sinners and Worldlings. Let me not die the Death of a Sinner. When the Time shall come that I must leave this World, take me into thy Protection. *May my Soul die the Death of the Righteous; and may my last End be like his,* Numb. xxxv. O thou only Author and Giver of Grace, grant me thy Grace thus to end my Life. Then I shall not fear Death, nor be troubled at any Misfortunes or Afflictions of Life, since my Sorrow will be turned into Joy.

What a happy Thing, my Soul, after a short Suffering here, to obtain eternal Glory? Blessed Jesus, the Foundation of all our Hopes, and most generous Rewarder of all thy Servants, shall I murmur or complain, if I meet with Crosses and Afflictions in this world? No, dear Lord, nothing can happen to me, but by thy Permission, and thou orderest all Things for the best and the greater Good of those who love thee.

Thou

Thou hast promised, dear Jesus, to come again, and that in a little while we shall see thee. Come, gracious Lord, come quickly. Make no long tarrying, O my God, for my Soul longs for thee. I wait for thee with an earnest Desire to behold, possess, and enjoy thee. O finish this little while, and call me from the Miseries of this World to the Happiness of thy Kingdom: But this when thou pleasest. Prepare me, by thy Grace, for thyself, and take me to thyself in thine own good Time.

Fourth *SUNDAY* after *Easter*.

The GOSPEL, St. *John* xvi. 5.

AND now I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have spoken these Things to you, Sorrow hath filled your Heart. 7. But I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: But if I go, I will send him to you. 8. And when he is come, he will convince the World of Sin, and of Justice, and of Judgment. 9. Of Sin; because they believed not in me. 10. And of Justice; because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. 11. And of Judgment; because the Prince of this World is already judged. 12. I have yet many Things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. 13. But

13. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all Truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what Things soever he shall hear, he shall speak: And the Things that are to come he shall shew you.

14. He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

In this Gospel we may observe how our Blessed Saviour gently reproves his Apostles for not asking him, whither he went. He had frequently spoke of his leaving them; that he was to go away from them; that, within a little while, they should not see him; and yet they seemed not at all solicitous whither he was to go when he left them. In this Conduct of the Apostles may be seen the Behaviour of too many Christians, who are altogether careless, and never think of putting that necessary Question to themselves: *Whither goest thou?* And, yet, it highly concerns every one, not only to ask, but to know also, whither they are going. It is of much greater Importance than all the busy Affairs of a bustling World. To ask, and to think where we are going, and which Way we take to arrive safe at our Journey's End; what Provisions we are to have, what Security against losing our way, and missing the Port we are bound to. These are interesting Points, and to be careless or indifferent about them, justly deserves a severe Reproof, and

and we shall deservedly pay dear for our Folly. Our Time runs on. Life hastens to an End. We are all going; but whither? Where do we tend? To Eternity; to another Life that will never end, and which will be a Life either of endless Happiness or Misery. Whither then do we go? Are we walking towards Heaven; or are we marching in the broad Way to Hell? Christians, let this Thought make a deep Impression upon you. Ponder it seriously; for whether we think of it, or not, we go, and run towards Death, the End of our Lives, and our All depends on the Condition we shall be found in at our last Moments. It is our Interest as well as our Duty, to prepare ourselves, and nothing will more efficaciously stir us up to be diligent in making a good Preparation, than frequently to consider, that we are upon the Removal; that we every Day draw nearer the Place whither we are going. *O that Men were wise, says holy Moses, that they would consider their latter End!* Deut. xii. O that Christians would be so prudent, as sometimes examine themselves about what so nearly concerns them! The Thoughts of Death bring no Trouble or Inconvenience, but to those, whose Hearts are so fast linked to the vain and sinful Pleasures of the World, that they do not care to leave them; and yet, notwithstanding our closest Attachment to the Things of this Life, we must quit them sooner or later. Die we must, and know not how soon. Can any Folly or Stupidity then be
greater

greater, than to live in a careless and negligent Manner, and never to consider whither we are going? Or ask ourselves what will become of us after Death? We believe a future State of Rewards and Punishments; that if we live well, we shall be eternally happy; but, if wickedly, shall be eternally miserable. This is a fundamental Article of our holy Religion; and as the Belief of it will do us no Service, if we do not act conformable to it by the constant Practice of Virtue, it must be owned to be a Matter of the highest Importance to us, to know whither we are going; whither, by the Conduct of our Lives, we tend to Happiness or Misery. When we come to the End of our Time, it will be impossible to step back to correct past Errors and Mistakes. It is now, while we have Time, and it is only now, that we can secure ourselves. If we desire to be eternally happy, we must tend to Heaven, by loving and serving God faithfully to the End of our Lives.

A further and useful Subject of our Reflection on the Gospel of this Sunday, may be those Words of *Jesus Christ*: *When he is come, the Holy Ghost, he will convince the World of Sin; because they believed not in me.* That divine Spirit will condemn all those of Infidelity, who refuse to hearken to the Words of Truth declared and made manifest to them. But he will not only argue the Infidel Part of Mankind, of Sin, because they refuse to hear and obey Christ; but much more
severely

severely those, who say they believe in him, and by their wicked Lives deny him. Those who call themselves Christians, and glory in saying they are Members of his Church, and by their Actions contradict that Faith they talk so much of. If nothing more was required than a speculative Belief of what Christ has taught. If a meer Assent to, or acknowledging the Truths of our holy Religion was sufficient, we might then have no Reason to fear. Multitudes would be safe, who now are in the most imminent Danger of being eternally lost. The sacred Oracles of *Jesus Christ* assure us, that Faith alone will not save us. Our Faith must be perfected by Charity, or good Works, without which it is dead. Do we believe? The Devils believe and tremble. Wicked Christians will have just Cause to tremble likewise, when they consider how opposite their Actions are to that Faith they pretend to. The Holy Ghost will argue such of practical Infidelity, because they have not believed in Christ, so as to observe his Commands; and the Condemnation of such will be greater, and more severe than of those who never heard of, or acknowledged *Jesus Christ*. Christians, consider, and think seriously of this. If you believe in Jesus Christ as you ought. If you acknowledge him your Lord and Master, shew yourselves his true Disciples by doing those Things he commands you, and regulating your Lives by the Precepts of that holy Gospel of his you profess to believe. Do not outrage him by your Behaviour;

Behaviour ; nor again crucify him by your Sins ; and let him not accuse you of Ingratitude and Folly, nor convince you of Sin by your Disobedience to him. If you will not be persuaded to reflect on those serious Truths ; if you will not hearken to the most useful Advice that can be given to you, and in a Point of so much Moment, as is your eternal Salvation, you will, one Day, perhaps too late, see your Folly, when it will be impossible for you to retrieve it. The Judgment with which we shall then be judged, will be very strict and severe. Our own guilty Consciences will both accuse and convict us. We may learn our Danger from the admirable and instructive Parable of the ten Virgins, the five foolish of whom in vain knocked at the Door, and were sent away with, *I know ye not*, St. Matt. xxv. Our Blessed Saviour sets this in a clearer Light in his divine Sermon on the Mount, where he says : *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven : But he that doth the Will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and cast out Devils in thy Name, and done many Miracles in thy Name ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me you that work Iniquity*, St. Matt. vii. Who is there that can hear these Words of our Divine Master, and not fear for himself ? Can we be indifferent in a Matter of
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so much Importance? Does not this clearly shew how necessary it is, that we should consider well whither we tend; and put the Question to ourselves: *Whither goest thou?* Let us confess that it is both our Interest and our Duty, and resolve to comply with the one, and secure the other, by seriously applying ourselves to the Service of God, and the Care of our Souls. For this, indeed, we stand in Need of the Grace of God, and which Grace he will not refuse, if we humbly ask it. Christ in this Gospel, promises the Apostles, that when the Holy Ghost should come, he should teach them all Truth. This is a gracious Promise made to his Church, that it should never err, and is a Proof of that Security we have by submitting to her, and relying upon her Authority. It is also a Promise which Christ makes of sending this holy Spirit upon all those who love him, to direct and assist them; to enlighten their Understanding; to confirm their Faith, and to enable them to overcome the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, till by the Grace of a final Perseverance, he brings them to his heavenly Kingdom. Here we may justly admire the infinite Goodness and Love of God to us. What Sentiments of Gratitude and Acknowledgment ought not our Hearts to be filled with, when we reflect on it. God does not stand in need of us, nor is it for himself, but for our Happiness, that he is so careful of us. Must it not, then be a most horrid Ingratitude, deserving the se-

verest Punishment, not to love him, who has so loved us? To offend him, to sin against him, and thereby to abuse his Goodness? And we may be assured that abused Mercy, will turn into the severest Justice. If we slight and contemn God's Mercy here, we shall feel his Power, one Day, and groan under the terrible Weight of his Justice hereafter.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Ah, my Soul! whither goest thou? Whither are we tending? To the End of Life, which will be soon over. We are going from hence, and must bid Adieu to every Thing in this World. Death will come, it makes its Appearance; it will soon meet us, and by a powerful Arrest carry us away from all our Enjoyments here. O thou eternal Author of all Things, the sovereign Lord of Life and Death imprint in my Mind the Remembrance of my latter End. May I frequently consider whither I am going. To die is the Sentence thou hast pronounced upon all Men, nor do I wish, or seek for any Exemption. I submit to thy Decrees, O wise Disposer of all Things, and am truly content that my Life and Death are at thy Disposal. I know, O Lord, that if I live well, I have no Reason to be afraid of Death. It will then be only a short Passage to eternal Life, and Happiness that will never end.

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I confess, O Jesus, my adorable Redeemer, I confess, O my sovereign Lord and Master, that I have Reason to apprehend and fear, when I consider how ungrateful and disobedient I have been to thee. How justly, O my God, may'st thou convict me of Sin, and of not practically believing in thee as I ought; but I trust in thy boundless Mercy and Goodness, and beg thy holy Grace, that I may now, at least, begin seriously to tend to thee, till I happily arrive at the Possession and Enjoyment of thee.

O infinite, immense and fathomless Abyss of divine Love! O Fountain of Mercy overflowing! my sovereign Good! my ultimate and last End! be thou henceforward the only Subject of all my Thoughts, and the only Object of my Wishes. O God of my Heart! my Portion and Inheritance for ever! I chuse thee, and I offer myself to thee, I consecrate myself to thy Service, and dedicate myself totally to thee.

Fifth *SUNDAY* after *Easter*.

The GOSPEL, St. *John* xvi. 23.

A MEN, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any Thing in my Name, he will give it you. 24. Hitherto you have not asked any Thing in my Name. Ask and you shall receive ; that your Joy may be full. 25. These Things I have spoken to you in Proverbs. The Hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in Proverbs, but will shew you plainly of the Father. 26. In that Day you shall ask in my Name : and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World ; and again I leave the World, and I go to the Father. 29. His Disciples say to him : Behold
now

now thou speakest plainly, and thou needest not that any Man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.

R E F L E C T I O N S .

The Design of our Blessed Lord in this Gospel being to inform his Disciples of the Advantages of holy Prayer, by telling them, that whatever they asked the Father in his Name, they should receive ; we may from thence learn what is our Duty in this Regard. Whatever Exhortations and Precepts he gave to his Apostles, they were designed for our Instruction likewise. As Prayer is a Duty every one ought to practice, in Order to stir us up to a frequent and devout Performance of it, our Reflections on the Gospel of this *Sunday* shall be to consider the Necessity and Advantages of it. The Necessity of Prayer will easily appear from that necessary Dependance we have upon God. Of ourselves, we are poor, weak and miserable Creatures, exposed daily to innumerable Dangers, spiritual and temporal, from which we can neither preserve, nor deliver ourselves : The Necessities we continually labour under are so many and so great, with Respect both to our Souls and Bodies, that we should sink under them, without the preserving Hand of him who made us. This Dependance we are taught to acknowledge in that Petition of the Lord's Prayer : *Give us this Day our daily Bread*, that is, Food and Rayment ; whatever

may be necessary to the Sustenance of our Body; for in vain we toil and labour for them unless he is pleased to give a Blessing to, and prosper our Care and Labour. If we consider the Necessities which our Souls are under, the Necessity of Prayer will shew itself in a stronger Light. To resist and overcome the Temptations and Attacks of our spiritual Enemies, we daily stand in Need of the Grace of God, which being his free Gift, is not to be expected but by humbly begging for it in Prayer, the Means he has appointed to convey his Grace to us. If we look into ourselves, what do we find but a perverse Will inclined to Evil; irregular Appetites, disordered Affections, and unmortified Passions? How often does Temptation prevail against us? How easily are we led away by Objects that please our Senses, and gratify our Inclinations? And can we expect to be delivered from these Dangers, otherwise than by the Grace of God; or can we flatter ourselves that he will give us this necessary Help, if we will not ask, and seek for it by Prayer? Let us learn then, from our own Weakness and Insufficiency the Necessity of having Recourse to God. Let us daily cry out with King *Jesophat*. *Whereas we are ignorant what to do, this only we have left, that we direct our Eyes to thee,* 2 Parap. And with the Disciples in the Boat, *Lord save us, we perish,* St. *Matt.* viii. If we will not ask to have our Necessities relieved, do we not deserve to smart under them? If in Danger we
will

will not ask Help and Assistance, do we not deserve to perish?

From considering the Necessity of Prayer, let us turn our Thoughts to reflect on the Advantages of it, another great and powerful Motive to its frequent Practice. A Thing done by Force, or from absolute Necessity, is, but too often, done with Reluctance and unwillingly. But when Profit follows Necessity; when what we are obliged to is also advantageous, then all Difficulty ceases. It becomes a happy Necessity, and the Obligation is rendered agreeable by the Advantages we reap from it. This is the general Notion of Mankind, and never disputed in temporal Affairs; a due Reflection upon which, with Regard to our spiritual Concerns, will make us more ready to comply with our Duties of Obligation, which are attended with great Advantages. Such is the Duty of Prayer, which we are bound to practice, and are encouraged to it by so many Advantages and Benefits, as none but those, who are altogether indifferent about the great Concerns of their Souls, will be careless or negligent in it. Many and great are the Advantages of Prayer, and the Benefits we receive by it. It is a certain Means to obtain Relief from God, in all our corporal Wants and Necessities; still more beneficial to our Souls. It reconciles us to God, and obtains Pardon of our Sins; for this we have his divine Word and Assurance, in almost every Page of holy Scripture. What Encourage-

ment this to pray, to ask Pardon, and to have our Sins forgiven us ! Prayer is likewise a a strong Shield of Defence against the Attacks of our spiritual Enemies, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, who will never prevail against us while we give ourselves to Prayer : Hence our Blessed Lord exhorts us to watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation. Prayer, and Diligence in it, is an effectual Method to obtain Grace to advance in Virtue and Perfection, and for a final Perseverance, which must crown all our other Virtues, and entitle us to Heaven. These are the Advantages of Prayer and the Benefits we may reap from it ; and being a Duty so necessary, what Excuse can those negligent Christians make, who, in a Manner, entirely neglect it ? Will they say they have no Time ? Can they find Time for other Things ; for Business, Pleasure and Diversions, and not find some little Leisure for the much more important Affair of their Salvation ? Such Excuses will not bear the Test, and will serve only to convince us of criminal Folly and Disobedience. To what has been said, may be added, as an encouraging Motive to Prayer, especially mental Prayer, or devout Meditation, the Pleasure and the Comfort the devout Soul finds in it. What can be more comfortable and agreeable to a Person in Distress, than to have a dear Bosom Friend to whom he may freely lay open his Grievs and Troubles ; and from him be assisted with proper and comfortable Advice ? And who is more our Friend
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than God, to whom we may freely, and at all Times have Recourse, and from him find Relief? What Entertainment more pleasant than, in Prayer, to converse with God himself, to pour forth our Souls before him, to admire and adore his infinite and incomprehensible Perfections? To praise him for his Goodness and Mercies to us? to lose ourselves, as it were, in the Contemplation of his boundless Love of us, and to raise up our Hearts to him in devout Acts of Love, Praise and Thanksgiving to him. These are Entertainments proper for, and becoming a Soul created by God, and to be eternally happy with him. Entertainments that give infinitely more solid Comfort and Pleasure to the Mind, than all those gay, idle and vain Amusements, in which too many consume and squander away most of their precious Time.

Our Blessed Saviour having exhorted his Disciples to pray does further instruct them how to pray. *If you ask the Father any Thing in my Name, he will give it to you.* In these Words are specified the Conditions required in our Prayers, and the Manner how we are to pray. Christ says, *Ask and it shall be given to you*; but then we must ask as we ought, that is, in his Name: Otherwise, we may pray, or rather say our Prayers, and yet, be sent away with, *I know you not*, St. Matt. xxv. Hence St. James, in his Epistle, says: *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss*, St. James iv. To ask right and in the Name of Christ, is to

ask for what may be for the Glory of God and the Good of our Souls. If we ask for any Thing else, or for other Ends, we do not ask in Christ's Name. If we ask for temporal Blessings, it must always be, and only so far, as they may conduce to God's Honour, and the Salvation of our Souls: And when we pray, it must be with great Humility and Reverence; this appears from the Nature of the Action, Prayer being an Address to the sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth, a Sense of his Greatness and our own Vileness, ought to fill us with Reverence and Humility, excellent Qualifications in Order to obtain what we ask. *The Prayer of the Humble shall penetrate the Clouds, Eccl. xxxv.* We must also pray with serious Attention, for Want of this our Prayers will prove a vain Lip Labour, called by the Wise Man, *a Sacrifice of Fools.* If our Heart and our Mind do not accompany our Lips, we may say or recite a great many good Words, and not pray. Another Condition of Prayer is, that it be made with Faith. St. Paul tells us, that he who approaches to God, must believe; for *without Faith it is impossible to please God?* Heb. xi. When we, therefore, go to Prayers we must believe God both able and willing to hear us, and ask with Confidence of receiving, and Perseverance in asking: This is another necessary Thing to be observed. Christ says: *Pray and faint not,* St. Luke xviii. God has promised to hear and grant our Requests and he will do it in his own good Time. He
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does not always immediately grant our Petitions ; he is to be intreated, and by constant and frequent addressing to him, we shew we rightly understand our Duty, to wait his Time with Patience and Submission. He in his Wisdom oftentimes judges it better for us not immediately to grant our Requests. He will have us continue to ask and pray, as the Means to obtain, in due Time, either what we ask, or what is more convenient and better for us. This is to pray in Christ's Name. Let us thus ask, and we shall receive.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Adorable Saviour of the World ! O Jesus, our Lord, and our God ! how condescending art thou to us poor Creatures. We stand in Need continually of thy gracious Help and Assistance, and thou permittest us, at all Times, to have Recourse to thee. Thou dost kindly invite us to come, and promisest to receive us. Thou biddest us to ask, and givest us an Assurance that we shall receive. Dear and bountiful Lord, shall I foolishly neglect a Duty so much to my Advantage ? No, sweet Saviour of my Soul ! I will make it my constant and daily Exercise. O my God ! grant me the Grace of Devotion, that I may love to converse with thee in holy Prayer. Fill my Heart, and inflame it with the Fire of divine Love, that I may delight to address myself to thee. Since thou art pleased to allow me this Liberty, how
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can I love thee, and yet withdraw myself from thee? If I have any Affection for thee, any Sense of thy Mercies and Favours, I cannot be unwilling to bless and praise thee.

How adorable are thy Counsels, O Lord! how strangely endearing are the Ways of thy Love! Thou hast declared thy Delight to be with the Sons of Men: O make it ours to be with thee! my God, and my All! what Advantages shall I not reap from a Commerce with thee in holy Prayer? I am surrounded by many and dangerous Enemies. I will call upon thee for Help and Assistance. O God, make Haste to help me: save and deliver me, O Lord. My Wants are many and very great, to whom should I apply for Relief but to thee, O thou inexhaustible Source of all Good; and in whom should I place my Confidence but in thee? O my sovereign Lord, and only Good! thy Perfections, and my own Happiness draw me to love thee. Thou hast all that is charming and amiable. Thy Beauty is beyond Expression, thy Goodness above Comprehension, and thy Bounty inexhaustible. O that I had a thousand Tongues wherewith to bless thee, and as many Hearts to love thee with! I will love thee as my only true and unchangeable Good; and I will praise and bless thee as long as I live, move and have a Being.

SUNDAY after *Ascension* ;

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Sixth *SUNDAY* after *Easter*.

The GOSPEL, St. *John* xv. 26. c. xv. 1.

BUT when the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give Testimony of me. 27. And you shall give Testimony, because you are with me from the Beginning. 1. These Things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the Synagogues : Yea, the Hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a Service

Service to God. 2. And these Things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 3. But these Things I have told you: That when the Hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.

REFLECTIONS.

Our Blessed Saviour having told his holy Apostles that he was to leave them, and a little while and they should not see him, they were filled with Sorrow and Concern to think of being deprived of his blessed Company, and be left alone to suffer those Trials and Persecutions he had said they should meet with and undergo for his Sake. In Order to comfort them, and to raise up their dejected Minds, he promised to send on them the Holy Ghost, and whom he calls the Comforter of which they stood in Need not only to revive their Spirits, but to support them under all those Troubles and Afflictions which would happen to them. Our Saviour frequently mentions the Holy Ghost, and speaks of him as a *Paraclete*, or Comforter, and as the Spirit of Truth. As the Paraclete, he told his Disciples, he should fill them with heavenly and internal Peace, such as the World could neither give, nor take away from them. That he should fill them with Joy and Comfort, which would enable them to bear up under all their Afflictions; turn all their Sufferings into Delights
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and Pleasures, and make them victorious and triumphant over the Malice and Power of their Enemies: That, as the Spirit of Truth, he would guide them into all Truth, and bring all Things to their Remembrance, which he the Lord had said to them. This Promise of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them into all Truth was made, not only to the Apostles, but to their Successors the Pastors and Governors of the Church, to instruct and guide the Faithful in all Truth, and to preserve the Church from all Error.

The holy Ghost is also a Comforter to all pious Christians, and is their Guide and Director to lead them into the Way of Truth. He comforts us in all our Troubles and Afflictions, and enables us to bear them with Patience and Resignation. He comforts us under all Trials and Sufferings with the Hopes of an everlasting Reward. He helps and assists us in all Temptations. He quickens and enlivens our Faith, raises our Hope, and perfects Charity. He bestows upon us the Grace of Perseverance, and crowns all our Labours with eternal Bliss. He is likewise our Teacher and Instructor, and makes us docile and submissive to the Authority of his Church, and those spiritual Guides he has placed over us, and by that Humility and Obedience preserves us from being drawn into the bye and dangerous Paths of Error and Heresy. Christians, how great Reason have we to bless and praise God for this his Goodness, not only to his Church in
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general, preserving her firm and unshaken upon that Rock, whereon he has placed her; but also to every one in particular, by affording them Means to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and by confessing it in their Lives and Conversations to bear Testimony of him; and from thence to have that Hope, which, as St. Paul says, *confoundeth not*, Rom. v. because of the Charity, or Love of God poured into our Hearts by this holy Spirit or Comforter who is given to us.

We may further consider how Christ forewarns his Apostles of the Persecutions they were to suffer, and of the severe Trials they were to undergo. He tells them beforehand that they might not be troubled or disheartened when this should happen to them, as if their Hopes and Expectations were disappointed, since he had called them to be his Disciples, that they might labour and suffer with him. That as Nothing of this Kind would happen to them by Chance or Hazard, they might prepare and be armed against them by Patience and Fortitude. For this he promised to send upon them ~~by~~ the Holy Ghost who should bring to their Remembrance all Things that he had told them; that when the Time came they might remember he had foretold them, they should be cast out of the Synagogues, be hated of all Men for his Sake, and that those who put them to Death would think they did Service to God. But under all these Trials he bids them not to be afraid, nor lose Courage, assuring

assuring them they should have given to them that Spirit which their Adversaries should not be able to resist, and that he who persevered to the End should be saved. The holy Apostles received with due Submission these Admonitions of their Divine Master. They had left all to follow Christ, and were content with what he was pleased to order concerning them. Having received the Holy Ghost, by their Preaching, Labours and Travelling, they planted the Faith of Christ in all Parts of the World; and chearfully underwent all those Trials and Persecutions he had foretold; and at last laid down their Lives, and sealed with their Blood the Doctrine they had taught. Here we may admire the Courage and Constancy of these holy Men, and give Thanks to God for having, by them established his holy Catholick Church. Let us also learn our own Duty, that if we desire to be true Disciples of Christ, we must be content to suffer likewise; to be persecuted by the Enemies of our Faith, and even suffer Death for his Sake, and in Defence of our holy Religion, if called to it.

It is thus we are to bear Testimony of *Jesus Christ*. He tells his Apostles, in this Gospel that they should bear Testimony of him. They did so, and so must we; for what our Blessed Lord says to them, is said to all Christians, who, as such, professing themselves his Disciples must give Testimony that they are really so; not only by losing their Lives, if
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necessary, but by their holy and exemplary Conduct, and living up to the holy Rules and pure Maxims of the Gospel they profess to believe. This is that general, and absolutely necessary Way of bearing Testimony of Christ, and justly requires our serious Attention. He has said : *Whoever shall deny me before Men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven*, St. Matt. x. It is practically to be ashamed of Christ and to deny him, when by wicked Lives, living in Sin, and wilfully breaking his Commandments, we shew that we belong not to him, but to the World his Enemy. Nothing can be a greater, or more shameful Contradiction, than for Christians to profess to believe the holy Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, and yet to live in direct Opposition to all the Precepts of it. To be true Believers in Speculation, and Infidels in Practice. Terrible will, one Day, the Condition of such be. Christ will deny them before his heavenly Father, and send them away, with, *I know ye not, Depart from me, you Workers of Iniquity*, St. Matt. vii. Here every Christian may see how strictly he is obliged to live up to his holy Profession, and that it is not only by true Faith that he is to bear Testimony of Christ, but also by a holy and exemplary Life, as Faith alone will not save us. The sacred Oracles assure us, that Faith without good Works, is dead. It is then our Interest, as well as Duty, to let our Lives bear Testimony, and prove that we are true Disciples of Christ, and Christians

stians indeed. To flatter ourselves it is enough to be nominally so, is to deceive ourselves, and fall into a most dreadful and dangerous Illusion, the dismal Consequences of which, we may, perhaps, find when it will be too late to prevent them. But, if we wisely provide for ourselves in Time and seriously apply ourselves to the Service of God, and live like what we profess to be, we shall be happy here and hereafter. Happy here, in the Testimony of a good Conscience, in that internal Peace and Comfort which the Holy Ghost will fill us with; and happy hereafter in the Kingdom of Heaven, an abundant Recompence for all the pious Labour and Pains we may undergo here. This is to be wise to Salvation and true Wisdom, as it will prove the Height of Folly and Madness to do otherwise, or to confess Christ with our Lips and to deny him by our Actions. This is an important Lesson, and which the Church reads to us from the Gospel of this *Sunday*. Let us so carefully attend to it, as it may prove Seed sown upon good Ground, and bring forth Fruit to everlasting Life and Happiness.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Come, O Divine Comforter ! O holy Spirit of Truth ! come and replenish my Soul with thy sevenfold Gifts and Graces. Comfort and sustain me under all the Trials, which, by the Disposition of thy most wise and loving Providence, may happen to me. Teach me to bear Testimony of the Truth, by walking in the Paths of Truth. O make my Heart a fit Habitation for thee, and adorn my Soul with all those Graces and Virtues which may render it agreeable to thee. I confess and acknowledge that I cannot do any Thing of myself, and without thee. I daily stand in Need of thy Help and Assistance, O give me then thy Grace, that I may be able to do what thou requirest of me. Every good Thing comes from thee, for thou art the true and only Source of all that is good. If I do any Thing that is good, not unto me, but to thy Name be all the Glory. May'st thou be for ever glorified in all that I do. O thou Author of all that I am and have ; for what can I do which may tend to thy Glory, of which thou art not the sole Author ? Thou art the Principle, the Beginning, and the End of all the Good I do, since I can do nothing but in thee, and by the Assistance of thy Grace.

O Divine Spirit ! come and visit thy poor Servant. O come, but not as passing by. Vouchsafe to take up thy Residence in my Heart,

Heart, and dwell therein by Love. Fortify me by thy Grace that I may resist and overcome all the Enemies of my Soul. Come and root out of my Heart all worldly Affections, and all inordinate Love of Creatures. O come and enrich me with thy heavenly Gifts. Sanctify my Soul and purify it, that it may be, in some Measure, a fit and worthy Habitation for thee. Come, and unite me inseparably to thee, and may nothing ever divide, or separate me from thee.

First *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Luke* vi. 36.

BE ye therefore merciful, as your Father is also merciful. 37. Judge not, and you shall not be judged: Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. 38. Give, and it shall be given to you. Good Measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give unto your Bosom. For with the same Measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. 39. And he spake also to them a Similitude: Can the Blind lead the Blind? Do they not both fall in to the Ditch? 40. The Disciple is not above his Master: But every one shall be perfect, if he be as his Master. 41. And why seeest thou the Mote in thy Brother's Eye:
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But the Beam that is in thine own Eye thou considerest not. 42. Or how can'st thou say to thy Brother : Brother let me pull the Mote out of thine Eye, when thou thyself seest not the Beam in thine own Eye ? Hypocrite, cast first the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to take out the Mote from thy Brother's Eye.

REFLECTIONS.

From the excellent Gospel of this *Sunday* and from what our Blessed Saviour there says, we may learn two important and necessary Lessons. Important, as they regard our future and eternal Happiness : Necessary, as this future and eternal Happiness depends on our Practice of the Virtues they teach. The first Lesson is that of being merciful to our Neighbour. The second, of not judging him. It would be a very great Mistake to suppose that what *Jesus Christ* here says, is only by Way of Council or Advice. They are positive Precepts. Commands which he lays upon all Christians. They are characteristick Marks, or Notes of being his true Disciples and Followers, and therefore deserve our serious Attention.

Be merciful, says Christ, *as your Father*, that is God, *is merciful*. Mercy is the darling Attribute of Almighty God. He delights to shew Mercy to the Sons of Men, and has shewn it in a most wonderful Manner, and
daily

daily gives sensible Proofs of his Goodness and merciful Disposition. Our Blessed Lord in his admirable and divine Sermon on the Mount, says: *Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect*, St. *Matt.* v. 48. And it is by shewing Mercy that we imitate, in some Degree, his Perfection. As he is merciful to us, we must be merciful one to another: Nor must this Mercy be limited or confined to particular Persons, as Friends, Relations, Acquaintance and those we have an Affection for. It must be general and universal, extending itself to every one, even to our Enemies, and those who with any Harm to us; and we are to observe that our Saviour does not bid us simply be merciful, but says, we must be so, as God our Father is merciful. We must, therefore, in the Practice of this Virtue, behave ourselves to others, as God does towards us. His Conduct must be the Pattern of ours. If then we confine our Mercy to a few, we fall short of that, and violate the Command here given. To love our Friends only, or to be merciful to them alone, is doing no more than the Heathens did. Christians are bound to much more. Their Charity and Mercy must extend itself to all Mankind, even to Enemies, and is to be shewn not only in pardoning Offences and Injuries, but also in doing Good to those who injure or offend us; for the Mercy of God consists not only in pardoning Sinners, as such, his Enemies; but also in a liberal Dispensation of Favours and Blessings,

Blessings, which he confers on them; and herein we must imitate him, and shew ourselves true Children of him our heavenly Father. How different from this is the Practice of those, who, instead of shewing Mercy to those who have offended or injured them, exact Satisfaction with the utmost Rigour? Who absolutely refuse all Accommodation, and breathe nothing but a Spirit of Revenge? Can such dare to call themselves Christians? They may usurp the Name, but Christ will say to them, at the last Day, *I know you not, depart from me you Workers of Iniquity.* St. Matt. vii. Mercy is what we all stand in Need of from God, and to obtain it, we must shew it ourselves one to another. *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy,* St. Matt. v.

Great and interesting are the Motives and Reasons why we should practice this Virtue, and which our Blessed Saviour makes Use of, to induce us to be merciful. *Forgive and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you.* Luke xi. If no other Consideration can prevail upon us to forgive Injuries, and to be merciful, the Motive of our Interest may certainly work upon us. When our Interest and Duty are so blended that we cannot omit our Duty without greatly prejudicing our Interest, what Excuse can be made for Non-compliance? Let us seriously consider, that we are Sinners, and without the Mercy of God in the Pardon of our Sins shall be eternally miserable. God has promised to pardon us, but on this Condition,

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that we pardon, and forgive others their Offences against us. As we deal with our Neighbour, God will deal with us. How dreadful then will be the Consequence of bearing Malice and refusing to forgive Injuries? We must expect no Forgiveness, if we do not forgive. In saying the Lord's Prayer, we desire God *to forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive those who trespass against us.* Christians, do we think, as well as say our Prayers? Do we reflect on the Nature and Purport of this Petition? When we say: *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive those who trespass against us.* Do we mean by these Words, *Lord, do not forgive me my Sins against thee, for I will not forgive those who offend or injure me?* Is there a Christian that will not shudder and tremble at the very Thought of making such an impious Petition as this? And yet he who bears Malice and Hatred to his Neighbour, and refuses to pardon and forgive Injuries, does make this impious Request, every Time he says the Lord's Prayer. Does not this deserve our serious Attention? Can we reflect upon it, and not be immediately reconciled to, and forgive our offending Neighbour.

Another Branch of Mercy is here also recommended and enjoined us. Charity to the Poor and Indigent. A ready Willingness to assist and relieve those who are in Want, and this liberally, according to our Ability. Christ would have us be generous in our Alms, and
promises

promises that whatever we give in Charity shall be returned with Advantage, *good Measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.* Luke vi. Here we may see how much it is for our Interest and Advantage to be charitable to the Poor and Needy. If we are liberal and bountiful to them, God will be so to us. If we are niggardly, covetous and sparing of our Alms, we must expect as little from him who has said: *With the same Measure that you shall mete withal, with the same Measure it shall be measured to you again.* Luke vi. Let us learn from hence and be moved to shew Mercy and Pity to the Poor and Needy, on all Occasions, according as we are able. Among all the Virtues which shine in the Lives and Actions of the Saints, none appear with greater Lustre than their great and extensive Charity to their Neighbour. They beheld and considered, and so should we, Jesus Christ in the Persons of the Poor, and with Reason, since he has told us that whatever we do to them, whom he styles his Brethren, we do to him; and he will reward us accordingly. *Blessed are the Merciful for they shall obtain Mercy,* St. Matt. v.

A second Lesson the Gospel of this Day teaches us is, not to judge, censure and condemn our Neighbour. *Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned.* To judge is a Privilege which belongs solely to God, who alone can judge rightly, as knowing the Secrets of all Hearts; and to those to whom he has

delegated his Authority, as Princes, Magistrates and Judges appointed to administer public Justice. As private Persons, we must not intrench upon this Prerogative, nor set ourselves up for Judges of our Neighbours Actions, for which, alas, we are no Ways qualified. This appears from the Judgements we too often pass upon others, especially on those, whom we do not so well like or esteem. When we judge, it is commonly with Severity and Rigour; and our Judgements many Times are as unjust, as rash and severe. To correct this censorious and harsh Temper, our Blessed Lord forbids us to judge any one; if we do, we shall be judged with equal Severity, but more Justice. If we do not thus rashly and hastily judge others, God will not judge nor condemn us as culpable. If we are not forward and hasty to condemn others, we shall not be condemned by him of Uncharitableness. If we considered, as we ought, our own many and great Faults, and how little we are able to justify ourselves, we should seldom find a just Occasion, nor be so ready to judge and condemn our Neighbour, as we generally are. Hence our Blessed Saviour bids us, first to draw the Beam out of our own Eye, that we may see clearly to draw the Mote out of our Brother's Eye. Happy, if we would, in the first Place, take Care of ourselves, and amend our own Faults, then we should see clearly, and be able with the Eye of true Charity to admonish and correct others, and our Admonitions

nitions might produce the desired Effect. He that reproves another of a Fault, ought not to be guilty of it himself, lest not Charity but Pride make him pretend to the Office of Censor. Would we be as severe to ourselves as we too generally are to our Neighbours, and as quicksighted to discern our own great Faults, as we are to spy out and discover his smaller Failings, we should not so often, nor so easily pass so many hasty and rash Judgements, nor offend God and hurt our Neighbour by Censure and Detraction. Christians, reflect seriously on this, and on your own Conduct and Behaviour in this Point, whether or no, you have a due Regard to this our Blessed Lord's Command. Your own Interest is deeply concerned in it, and your future Happiness greatly depends upon it. God will deal with you, as you deal with others, and, *with what Judgment you have judged, you shall be judged*, St. Matt. vii. These are the Words of Jesus Christ, and will be verified, one Day, for or against us.

R E F L E C T I O N S .

O my God, and most merciful Father ! O thou, whose Mercies are infinite, and whose Goodness knows no Bounds ! Thou delightest to shew Mercy to the Sons of Men. Stamp upon my Soul the same merciful Disposition that I may love all Mankind, even those who may be Enemies to me, and upon all Occa-

sions shew Mercy and Kindness to them. Thou art my Father, and I am thy Child, let me always carry this Resemblance of thee. May no Rancour or Malice, no Hatred or Animosity against any one, deface this Image, and make me unlike to thee.

O thou inexhaustible Treasure of Mercy and Goodness! who, out of the Riches of thy Bounty, dost freely give to every one who asketh, and sendeth no one empty away. My poor Soul is in great Want and Necessity. Give me what I stand in Need of. Give me thy Grace, that I may ardently love, and faithfully serve thee. Give me, dear Lord, a merciful Disposition towards others, a Spirit of Compassion for all who are in Want and Necessity, willingly to relieve them according to my Ability, that being merciful to others here, I may obtain Mercy from thee hereafter.

How bountiful art thou, O my God! Thou puttest all our Alms, and the Offices we do our Neighbour to thine own Account, and dost promise to pay them with large Interest. The Measure of thy Goodness, O liberal and generous Lord! is without Measure. As thy Riches have no Bottom, thy Liberality has no End. For a Mite, thou givest Treasures infinite in the other World, and a thousand Blessings in this. Never any one will loose by thee, or for being charitable for thy Sake. Thou dost not desire to deprive us of our Wealth, but teachest us to lay it out with Advantage. Shall I not then hearken to thee?

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Can I put what I have in safer Hands than thine? No, dear Lord, with thee only it can be secure.

O God of Equity, whose Judgements are just, and whose Ways are righteous, preserve me, by thy Grace, from all uncharitable judging or condemning my Neighbour. As I stand in Need of, and crave Mercy from thee, may I be favourable and merciful to others, I leave every one to thee, O Lord, for thou art their Sovereign and supream Judge, to whom they are responsible for what they do. May all my Care be for myself, I will judge and condemn myself, that I may not be judged, nor condemned by thee.

Second *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Luke* xiv. 16.

A Certain Man made a great Supper, and invited many. 17. And he sent his Servant at the Hour of Supper to say to them who were invited, that they should come, for now all Things are ready. 18. And they began all to make an Excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a Farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused. 19. And another said, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee to hold me excused. 20. And another said, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21. And the Servant returning, told these Things to his Lord. Then the Master of the House being angry, said to his Servant; Go out quickly into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor and the Feeble, and the Blind and the Lame. 22. And the

the Servant said : Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is Room. 23. And the Lord said to the Servant : Go into the Highways and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my House may be filled. 24. But I say unto you, that none of these Men, who were invited, shall taste of my Supper.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

In this significant Parable, under the Representation of a great Supper, and to which many were invited, is signified the Kingdom of Heaven, and the eternal Happiness of it ; as also the infinite and unlimited Goodness of God who has designed this Happiness for every one, and calls every one to it. For this he sends his Servants, the Ministers of his Word, not only to invite us to this celestial Banquet, but to tell us all Things are ready, and that our Presence is desired and expected. These Messengers, finding us backward, he sends again and again, who with repeated Invitations in his Name, exhort and press us to accept of the Honour and Happiness offered to us ; to partake of the truly good Things, the rich Dainties he has provided for us : And this he does, not out of any Necessity, or that he stands in Need of us, but out of his pure Love, and desire that we should enjoy the Happiness for which he made us. What Bounty ! what Goodness this ! Christians seriously reflect who it is that invites, and to what you are invited.

vited. It is God, the great King and sovereign Lord of Heaven, infinitely happy in himself, and who stands not in Need of us, and will not be less happy, less what he is, if, neglecting his gracious Invitation, we make ourselves miserable for ever, by refusing to obey his Calls. What Stupidity ! what Folly ! and how great must be the Ingratitude of all those who will not accept of his kind Offers ! Should a Prince send one of his Servants to invite us to his Palace to partake of a royal Entertainment prepared on Purpose for us, we should not dare to refuse. We should think ourselves highly favoured, and be proud of the Honour he did us. Can we then refuse the infinitely greater Honour God does us by inviting us to his Supper, the Happiness of Heaven ? Shall we so much esteem the Favours of an earthly Prince, and slight those of God the King of Kings ? Do we consider to what we are invited ? Not to a Supper or Entertainment of three or four Hours, or for a Night, but to Heaven, and eternal, never-ending Happiness ; to the Enjoyment and Possession of God, with all the Angels and blessed Spirits. To taste those good Things *which Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, nor can the Heart of Man conceive, and which God has prepared for those who love him*, 1 Cor. ii. What Christian is there who reflecting upon this can stand so much in his own Light, as to contemn and refuse the Invitation ? Do not such deserve to be excluded, and declared unworthy to taste
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of this heavenly Banquet ? Certainly they do, and will, one Day, see, and condemn their own Folly when it is too late to retrieve it. And are there not many such ungrateful and unthinking Christians, who, like the Men in the Gospel, refuse the Invitation, and endeavour to excuse themselves by wretched frivolous Reasons, which serve but to render their Folly and Ingratitude greater and more criminal?

This will evidently appear by considering the Excuses which were made by those who were invited to the Supper; which are of the same Nature as those made by Sinners and Worldlings for not obeying the Calls of God, or hearkening to the Invitation he gives by his Ministers and Servants. One said he had bought a Farm, and that he must needs go and see it. Another, that he had bought some Oxen, and was going to try them. Thus they preferred a little Interest or Gain to the Honour designed, and were therefore justly declared unworthy to taste of the Supper which had been prepared for them. In like Manner, too many worldly minded Christians contemn the Happiness of Heaven, and postpone it to temporal Profit and Advantage. They say, that they are so busily employed, and taken up with the Affairs of this World, in getting Riches, the great and sole Object of their Desires, as they have no Time to apply themselves to the Service of God, or to the Care of their Souls. If God, will let them
alone

alone to pursue their worldly Views, and grow rich, they desire no more. As for Heaven and future Happiness, that, they cannot attend to. Unthinking Men ! thus to prefer a little sordid Interest here, and which can only be enjoyed for a few Years, to the gaining of eternal and never-failing Riches hereafter ! Has not Jesus Christ expressly said : *What doth it profit a Man if he gain the whole World, and suffers the Loss of his Soul ? Or what Exchange shall a Man give for his Soul ?* St. Matt. xvi. Will he be the better, though, in this World, he possessed the greatest Riches he could wish for, if in the next World, and after his Death he comes to be miserable for ever ? What a wretched bad Bargain does the Miser, the Worldling make ? He barter the never-ending Riches of Heaven for a few earthly Pence. Nor are they less unreasonable, or less criminal who neglect the Care of their Souls for the vain and sinful Pleasures of Life. A third, who was invited to the Supper alledged, that he married a Wife, and rudely said, he could not go. Too many there are so addicted to base and sinful Pleasures, as not to have any Liking to the pure and chaste Delights of Heaven ; and rather than be denied their sensual and unlawful Satisfactions, sling up all Title and Pretensions to future Happiness, and excuse themselves from any Concern about it. How deplorable is the Condition of such ! How extravagantly foolish their Conduct ! Is there any Thing in this World that can equal ~~the~~ the

the Loss of Heaven, and being for ever excluded that happy Kingdom! Can all the Honours, Riches and Pleasure of the Universe make up the Loss of our Souls? O that Men were wise; that they would consider these Things, weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and see the Difference. They would then make a wiser and better Choice. How readily would they accept the gracious Invitation, and how careful not to be excluded! We may therefore safely conclude, that as Almighty God manifests his infinite Bounty and Goodness to us, in preparing for us so great and heavenly a Banquet, and so freely invites and calls us to it, we must be guilty of an unpardonable Ingratitude and Folly to slight his Goodness, and refuse his Bounty. As no just Excuse can be made; so, whatever Sinners and Worldlings may alledge to justify their Non-compliance, will only serve to make them more criminal, to increase their Guilt, and render their Punishment justly more severe.

The Excuses made by the Men in the Gospel were so far from being admitted, as they served but to move the Prince who invited them, to Indignation at the unworthy Affront they put upon him, and made him declare, that none of them should so much as taste of his Supper. God is infinitely good and gracious. He has provided for us eternal Happiness, and calls us to partake of it. He waits with incomparable Patience for our coming. He sends his Messengers again and again after
us,

us, to press and persuade us; but if we continue to slight his Kindness, to make Excuses and refuse his Favours, he will severely punish our Contempt and Ingratitude. If we continue to abuse his Goodness and Mercy, he will give Way to his Justice, and make us smart under the Rigour of a most just and severe Punishment. We shall be excluded the heavenly Banquet to which we are now invited, and others more worthy be called in; while we, thus shut out, shall bewail our Folly, repenting of it when it is too late. We may permit the World and the Devil to amuse and deceive us here, and keep us in a Neglect of our Salvation; but there will ~~be~~ a Time come when we shall see our fatal Mistake, and experience the dismal Consequences of it. Now therefore is the acceptable Time. Now it is that we must hearken to the Calls of God, and obey him. Now, while we have Time, we must endeavour by good Works to make our Calling and Election sure, as St. Peter advises. If we neglect this, and flatter ourselves with being admitted when the Door is shut, we shall be sent away with, *I know ye not, depart from me you Workers of Iniquity*, St. Matt. xxv.

ASPIRATIONS.

O Bounty of God, thus to invite us poor Worms of the Earth to his heavenly Table, to the Enjoyment of eternal Bliss! Lord, what

is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou dost regard him?

Psal. viii. How infinitely am I bound to praise and bleſs thee, O my God, for calling me likewise, and inviting me to partake of the good Things thou haſt prepared for thoſe who love thee. Thou inviteſt us to Happineſs, O thou eternal and incomprehenſible Source of all Good! Thou ſendeſt thy Meſſengers, and doſt kindly preſs us to come. Thou doſt ſollicit and intreat us, as if thy own Good depended upon it, and thou coudeſt not be happy unleſs we were ſo likewise. Wonderful Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion! ſhall I not love thee for this? ſhall I be ungrateful, and ſlight theſe Mercies? Ah, no. Burn then my Heart, burn with Love of him who thus loves you.

Adorable Saviour of the World! my God and my All! I deſire to partake of this heavenly Banquet. Let me there ſatisfy and fill the Deſires of my Heart; for there, and there only, ſhall I find what I ſeek. Thou haſt made my Heart for thee. May it ever be unquiet till it reſt in thee. O! when, all Impediments being removed, wilt thou make me one with thee, that I may inſeparably adhere to thee! Thou art my Hope and my Refuge. Thou art my Joy and my Conſolation, and all my Delight ſhall be in thee.

I come, dear Lord, I come to thee. Nothing ſhall hinder me. I abandon all the World for Love of thee. Adieu Honour. Adieu Riches. Farewel all worldly Pleaſures. You
ſhall

shall have no Place in my Heart and Affections. They are placed upon nobler Objects, God himself, and the inestimable Delights to be found in him. My God! how happy is a Soul that loves thee? Happy here, by Hope and Confidence in thee. Happier hereafter in the Enjoyment of thee.

Third *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Luke* xv. 1.

NOW the Publicans and Sinners drew near unto him to hear him. 2. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: This Man receiveth Sinners, and eateth with them. 3. And he spake to them this Parable, saying: 4. What Man of you that hath an hundred Sheep: And if he lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the Defart, and go after that which he lost until he find it? 5. And when he hath found it, lay it upon his Shoulders rejoicing. 6. And coming Home, call together his Friends and Neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my Sheep that was lost? 7. I say unto you, that even so there shall be Joy in Heaven upon one Sinner that doth Penance, more than upon ninety-nine Just, who need not Penance.

Penance. 8. Or what Woman, having ten Groats; if she lose one Groat, doth not light a Candle, and sweep the House, and seek diligently till she find it? 9. And when she hath found it, call together her Friends and Neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the Groat which I had lost. 10. So, I say to you, there shall be Joy before the Angels of God upon one Sinner doing Penance.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

This is the Gospel of the Day; and who can read, or attend to it, and not behold the infinite Love and Bounty of God shining with the greatest Lustre in the comfortable and instructive Parables here delivered by Jesus Christ? He compares himself to a Man, who having lost one of a hundred Sheep, leaving the ninety-nine, goes in Quest of the Sheep lost, seeking diligently till he finds it, carries it back again to the Flock, and invites his Neighbours to rejoice with him for the Recovery of his Loss. It is certainly the Office of a Shepherd to take Care of his Sheep, to watch over them, and to seek after any of them when gone astray and lost. This Christ, the truly good Shepherd, has done, and continues to do with all Tenderness and Care in Regard of Sinners, poor lost Sheep running astray, and in Danger every Moment of being devoured by the infernal Wolf. When a Sinner, as a lost Sheep,
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wanders from the Paths of Holiness and Virtue, and is running on to his own Ruin, then this kind and benevolent Shepherd seeks after him, and endeavours to find him, and to bring him back. He calls after him by the Inspirations of his Grace: He endeavours to make him hear by the Checks of his Conscience: He sends likewise his Servants, the Ministers of his holy Word, who are ordered to lay before him the Danger he is in; the dismal Consequences of not returning to the Sheepfold: The severe Punishment he must expect if he continues obstinate. These Ministers of God represent to such Sinners the Goodness also, and Bounty of Christ, their Shepherd, how ready and willing he is to receive them kindly, if they will return; that he will join them again to his Flock, and nourish them with good Pasture. Thus does Christ manifest his Love to his Sheep, how careful that none be lost, that those who are gone astray may be found, and thereby cause joy, not only to just and good Men upon Earth, but also to the Angels in Heaven, who rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner. What Encouragement this to Sinners to return and be converted! to be found by Repentance, after they have been lost by Sin! miserable they who stop their Ears to the Voice of this good Shepherd, and obstinately refuse to be brought back! Such deserve to be abandoned and left to themselves, and to such may be said: *Thy Perdition is of thyself, O Israel. Osea xiii.*

But

But if this Goodness and Bounty of God has not a due Effect upon Sinners, a serious Reflection on the sad Condition they are in may work upon them. Let us consider the Case of a Sheep thus lost and strayed from the Flock, that is, of a Sinner lost in the Ways of Sin and Wickedness. This will best appear by reflecting on the dismal Effects of Sin, by which we lose ourselves, Effects truly dreadful. Sin robs us of Grace, that most precious Jewel, which, as none but God can give, so he only knows the true Value of it. Grace is the Fountain of all Blessings; it makes us beloved Children of God, and gives us a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven. This Title Sin deprives us of, and makes us Enemies to God. He will be no longer a Father to Sinners, while they wilfully remain in Sin, but a severe Judge to condemn and punish them. While we are in a State of Grace, we partake of the Prayers and Sacraments of the Church with Profit and Advantage; we have a Share in the Merits of the Saints, and of the far greater Merits of Christ. We live in the Favour, and under the Protection of God. But, alas! all this is lost: We are deprived of all this by Sin. While we are in Sin, we are dead to God, and become Slaves to the Devil, and must expect to share with him in his Torments hereafter. As Christians, by the Sacrament of Baptism, we are made Temples of the Holy Ghost, but Sin defiles these sacred Temples, and drives the Holy Spirit from them; for he himself has positively

fitively said : He will not dwell in a Body subject to Sin. As Christians we are designed to be Companions of Angels ; but Sin will fling us into the Society of Devils. These are the sad Effects of Sin, and this the truly deplorable Condition of a Sinner. How great then is the Goodness of God, who desires to draw us from this sad State ; to seek us thus lost and is sincerely willing to find us, and restore us again to Happiness ! The Consideration of the sad Effects of Sin, and the miserable Condition of a Sinner, will make it appear that Sin is the greatest of all Evils, and, like an admirable Contrast, will set the Mercy of God in a proper and clear Light. On one Hand, we may behold what ought to be a useful Caution to take proper Care that we be not drawn away, and be lost in so sad a State. On the other Hand, we have an Encouragement to return to God, and be willing to be found when he seeks after us, and not continue obstinate in our Folly, and remain in those Ways which lead to Death.

From the sad State of a Sinner lost in Sin, let us turn our Thoughts to consider him happily found, by true Repentance and a sincere Conversion. *There shall be Joy in Heaven,* says Jesus Christ, *upon the Sinner that doeth Penance, more than upon ninety-nine Just, who need not Penance.* Happy Condition of a penitent Sinner ! of a lost Sheep thus found ! The Angels rejoice in Heaven. The Church triumphant, or the Saints in Heaven rejoice like-

likewise, and the Church militant, good Men upon Earth congratulate the Return of this lost Sheep: But none has more Reason to rejoice than the converted Sinner himself. The sad Condition he is freed from, and the Happiness to which he is restored, are just Subjects of his most grateful Acknowledgements. If it is a Happiness to be freed from a cruel Slavery, from a Prison and Chains, to enjoy Liberty and Freedom; how fortunate! how happy is a Sinner freed from the cruel Slavery of the Devil, from the heavy Chains of Sin, and the sad Prison of Hell designed for impenitent Sinners! Here a truly converted and penitent Sinner finds what must fill him with inexpressible Joy and Consolation and make him magnify the Goodness and Bounty of God, in thus setting him free, and to be extremely careful that he does not lose himself again, nor relapse into that sad State from which he has been delivered. It is not only his Duty, but his great Interest likewise to adhere to his good Shepherd, who has so mercifully sought after and found him when lost. This is the Return for, and the Use such a converted Sinner ought to make of the Favour done to him. Wretched will his Condition be, if he again runs astray. He will then have Reason to fear lest such Ingratitude and Abuse of God's Mercy may provoke his Justice to abandon him, and leave him to be eternally lost in a just Punishment of his wilful Folly and Impiety. This is the Lesson, these are the moral Instructions the Church reads

reads to us from the Gospel of this *Sunday*, and designed for our Benefit, they deserve our serious Attention, that encouraged, on one Hand, to return to God by true Repentance, we may, on the other Hand, learn to make a right Use of his Mercy, and be faithful to him; that we so may be of the Number of his true Sheep, who hear his Voice and follow him. Nothing can, or ought more powerfully to induce us to this, than the abundant Mercy and Goodness of God to all, even the greatest Sinners, whom, as lost Sheep, he carefully seeks after; so tenderly, when found, lays upon his own Shoulders, and carries back to his Flock; for, as he assures us, by the Mouth of his Prophet, he desires not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. *Ezech. xviii.*

Hear and consider this well, O Sinners, and turn from your evil Ways. By true Penitance, and a sincere Conversion, cause Joy to the Angels of God in Heaven, and secure to yourselves the eternal Happiness for which you were created, and for which you were redeemed by the sacred Blood and Passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Jesus, the true and only Shepherd of Souls! What shall I say, having so often gone astray like a Sheep that is lost? Alas! my God, and only Good, how strangely foolish have I been, in leaving thy sweet and delightful Pastures; in separating myself from the Company of the Just, thy faithful Sheep, and losing myself in the crooked Ways of Sin and Folly? This has been but too often the Case of my poor Soul, and thou hast graciously sought after her, in order when found to bring her back again to the Fold. How much am I obliged to thee, dearest Lord, for this thy Love and Bounty! What Returns? Shall I continue obstinate and deaf to thy gracious Calls? Shall I foolishly persist in losing myself and refuse to be found by thee? No, dear Life of my Soul, in whom alone I can be happy, let it suffice what I have done. I now desire to return to thee again, and meet thee with a hearty Sorrow for having abandoned thee.

O Jesus, my adorable Saviour and Redeemer! I have just Reason to admire thy infinite Love and Mercy, who has so often sought me when I was lost, and hast so kindly brought me back again to thee. Ah, let me never more abuse thy Bounty and Goodness. Henceforth I will continually think on this thy Goodness, and the happy Effects of it, which I have so often experienced,

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experienced, that I may be grateful to thee. O that I could make thee some Return suitable to the Obligations I lie under to thy Love.

O ye blessed Angels of Heaven, who rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, praise the Lord for his Mercy to me. I join my Heart and Voice to your's, and with you bless and praise his holy Name. May I praise, love and serve him her, till I come to enjoy and praise him, with you, for ever in Heaven.

Fourth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Luke* v. 1.

AND it came to pass, that when the Multitudes pressed upon him to hear the Word of God, he stood by the Lake of *Genesareth*. 2. And saw two Ships standing by the Lake: But the Fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their Nets. 3. And going up into one of the Ships that was *Simon's* he desired him to draw back a little from the Land. And sitting, he taught the Multitudes out of the Ship. 4. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to *Simon*: Launch out into the Deep, and let down your Nets for a Draught. 5. And *Simon* answering, said to him: Master, we have laboured all the Night, and have taken nothing; but at thy Word I will let down the Net. 6. And when they had done this, they inclosed

closed a very great Multitude of Fishes, and their Net broke. 7. And they beckoned to their Partners who were in the other Ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the Ships, so that they were almost sinking. 8. Which, when *Simon Peter* saw, he fell down at Jesus's Knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man, O Lord. 9. For he was wholly astonished, and all who were with him, at the Draught of Fishes which they had taken. 10. And so were also *James* and *John*, the Son, of *Zebedee*, who were *Simon's* Partners. And Jesus saith to *Simon*: Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch Men. 11. And having brought their Ships to Land, leaving all Things, they followed him.

REFLECTIONS.

From the Gospel of this *Sunday* we may learn one of the most important Lessons given to us in the sacred Oracles. A Lesson which will be of great Use to us in the moral Conduct of our Lives. From the Answer *St. Peter* made to Jesus Christ, bidding him let down his Net for a Draught of Fishes; *Master, we have laboured all Night, and have taken Nothing*, we may learn the Vanity and Emptiness of this World; how void it is of any Thing that can make us truly happy. The World is very fitly compared to a Sea, wherein Sinners and Worldlings toil and labour all

the Night of their Lives, and catch nothing. Their Life is a dark tempestuous Night: when that is over, and the Morning of Eternity begins to appear, the Issue of all their worldly Labour and Pains is to have taken nothing: they have laboured in vain; and why so? Because they have not laboured as they ought, and for what they should have sought after, the Salvation of their Souls. All their Pains have been taken in searching after empty Shadows, false Appearances of Good, for such, and no more, are all the Things of this World. This made the wisest of Men say, after long and full Experience, *Vanity of Vanities all is Vanity*, Eccl. i. and such will every Thing in this World appear to us. If we are so foolish as to spend all our Time in hunting after the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this Life, in the End we shall be forced to own that we have laboured all Night, and have taken Nothing. Nothing that can make us truly happy. The serious Consideration of this Truth, will be of very great Efficacy to correct our mistaken Notions, and draw our Affections from the Things of this World, and more wisely to labour and take Pains to procure those of Heaven. That every Thing in this World is Vanity, an empty Nothing, with Regard to our main Concern, will sufficiently appear when we consider that every Thing in it is uncertain, and of little or no Duration. Great Labour and Pains is often required to acquire worldly Enjoyments, and when obtained, are soon,
very

very soon lost. Though we should possess them as long as we live, when Death comes, which it will soon, perhaps sooner than we may imagine, then all will be over, nothing remain but the Confession of this Truth, *We have laboured all Night, and have taken Nothing.* We have busied ourselves all our Lives for the Things of this World, and, for them have neglected the grand Affair of our Salvation; but what have we gained thereby? Nothing. Nothing that can do us any Good, or make us happy. Sad Effect of sinful worldly Cares and Sollicitudes, thus to end in a Miserable Nothing.

Let us consider this Point a little further, and examine more particularly the Nature of worldly Enjoyments, and then the Truth of what has been asserted, or rather what *Solomon* says: *All is Vanity*, will evidently appear. Let Riches first come under our Consideration. It is certain that in themselves they are not evil: They have no intrinsic Malice; they may be wisely improved, and be made proper Instruments of eternal Bliss. But considered with Regard to an inordinate and immoderate Desire of them, and when our Hearts are entirely set upon them, and all our Care and Sollicitude is only to obtain Riches, and the Care of our Souls, the Duties of a Christian are neglected and violated for them, they may then be truly stiled Nothing, Nothing to the main Purpose. If any Thing, a great Hindrance and Impediment to the one Thing necessary:

cessary : And even with Regard to this World are rightly called *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. Hard, very hard oftentimes to be obtained, and when procured, cause a great Deal of Anxiety and Trouble to conserve. They are easily lost, and a thousand Accidents may deprive us of them. Experience may teach us this from innumerable Examples of those who have flowed, as I may say in Riches, and suddenly by an unexpected Reverse of Fortune, have been reduced to the lowest Degree of Poverty and Indigence. He, therefore, who toils and labours for Riches, only as Riches, gains nothing good, substantial and lasting, and will himself own, one Day, that he has laboured all Night, and has taken Nothing. Honour and worldly Grandeur are equally vain, transitory, and empty Nothings, meer Bubbles, or flying Shadows. The ambitious Man who, by a thousand laborious and servile Compliances obtains his wished-for End, and gains a Title and high Post ; what has he to boast of, or what has he gained to recompence his labour ! A little Smoak, a Vapour, which will soon pass away. He has gained Nothing sure and certain. Envy, the constant Attendant upon Honour and elevated Stations, too often deprive the ambitious Courtier of his seeming Happiness, and Experience teaches him that he has laboured and toiled for Nothing. Nor are worldly Pleasures more solid and lasting ; they are deceitful Baits, after all the seeming Comfort and Satisfaction we seek, or may take in them,

them, they leave a sharp Sting behind, a bitter Remorse of Conscience, and are truly worse than Nothing. How foolish, then, are they who place their Happiness in this World and the Enjoyments of it! after labouring the whole Time of their Life, in the End meet with a most terrible Disappointment, and gain Nothing, but lose all by losing Heaven and their Souls. Alas! the World is not what too many imagine it to be, nor can it afford us true Happiness and Content. It is not the End for which we are made. It is all Deceit and Imposition. Its Honours are vain, short and of no Duration. Its Riches are vain, perishable, and too apt to disturb our Minds, and by an ill Use of them, may damn our Souls. Its Pleasures are carnal, sinful and soon over. Every Thing in the World is empty and vain, and from whence we may truly conclude, *that Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity, but to love God and to serve him.* Imit. Christi. Lib. i. C. 1.

Saint Peter having at the Word of Jesus, loosed his Net and cast it into the Sea, immediately caught a very great Multitude of Fishes. Instructive Representation of the Happiness and Advantage of those who obey the Voice of God speaking to them, and quit the Service and Labours of the World to serve him. The Apostles struck with Wonder at the Miracle, when they came to shore, left their Nets and followed Christ. God gives us a thousand demonstrative Proofs that he is the only Master we ought to follow and serve. Why then are

we so backward, so unwilling to serve him? We shall gain nothing by staying in our Boats, entangled in the Nets of worldly Goods and Enjoyments. Let us leave and abandon them all for him who calls and invites us to himself. We can leave nothing here but what is poor, mean and insignificant; and in following him shall gain what will make us eternally rich and happy. Whatever we part with here, is but some little transitory Advantage, which will be abundantly recompenced hereafter. This we are assured of by Truth itself, who has said: *Every one that hath left House, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name's Sake, shall receive a hundre fold, and shall possess Life everlasting, St. Matt. xix.* By this hundredfold is to be understood that internal Peace and Quiet that interiour Satisfaction, which arises from a good Conscience and living virtuously; a comfort, a Pleasure much greater than all this World can afford, and is an earnest, a Pledge of the much greater Happiness we shall enjoy hereafter. It is our Interest then, as well as our Duty, to serve God; and being thus called by him, what can we say for not obeying him? If we refuse to comply with, or to hearken to his Calls, do we not foolishly prefer Earth to Heaven, the Things of this World, to the Salvation of our Souls? And what will be the Consequence? After all our worldly Care and Sollicitude, we shall have taken Nothing, have lost our Souls and rendered

ed them eternally miserable. Let us consider this seriously, and resolve to break off with the World, quit all its sinful Ways and Maxims, to leave all for God, and to dedicate ourselves to his holy Service, that thereby we may gain eternal Happiness, and be admitted, as true Followers of Christ, into the glorious Kingdom of Heaven.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Ah my infinitely good God! O Jesus my adorable Master! shall I make a Moment's Delay, when thou callest me to thee? Can I doubt of reaping abundant Advantage in obeying thee? No, dearest Lord, I know that in following and serving thee, I shall obtain the glorious Recompence of eternal Happiness. How much am I obliged to thee, O eternal Source of all Good, for thy Love and Bounty in thus calling me to thee? May thy Goodness work upon my Soul, and make me truly grateful in a just Return of reciprocal Love and Affection to thee.

O God of my Heart, of my Soul, and of all that I have! Let me never prefer this World to thee; for nothing in this World deserves my Affections. O true Life of my Soul, by whom I live, and without whom I die; in whom I rejoice, and without whom I am sad, replenish my Heart and Soul with a most ardent Love of thee. Do thou so possess my Heart, dear Lord, as no living Creature

may have Place therein. May I from this Moment die to the World, and live only to thee, love and serve thee alone. My God I desire to love thee with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my Strength. I wish I could love thee more. I can never love thee sufficiently, and as thou deservest to be loved. At least, my God, and my All, may I love as much as I am able, and never love any Thing but in thee, and for thee.

O when shall I be thus happy as to love and seek thee only? When shall I be totally thine? Remove, dear Lord, all Impediments and make me one with thee. May it be my daily Care to labour for thee, and may I every Day strive to increase in thy Love.

This World and all that it contains, are empty Nothings without thee. Thou, and thou only can'st satisfy me, and in thee alone I find true and solid Comfort. When I labour for thee, I find what I seek for; but after all other Pains and Toil, I gain nothing.

Fifth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* v. 20.

I Tell you, that unless your Justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. 21. You have heard that it was said to them of old : Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in Danger of the Judgment. 22. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his Brother, shall be in Danger of the Judgement. And whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in Danger of the Council. And whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell Fire. 23. If therefore thou offer thy Gift at the Altar, and there thou remember that thy Brother hath any Thing against thee. 24. Leave there thy Offering before the Altar, and go
first

first to be reconciled to thy Brother; and then coming, thou shalt offer thy Gift.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

What our Blessed Lord says in the Gospel of this *Sunday*, calls for our most serious Attention, as regarding a Point of the utmost Importance to us. He tells us, that unless our Justice or Righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Christians ! let us weigh well and consider the meaning of these Words of our Divine Master. To consider them right, will be of great Help to remove wrong Notions and dangerous Mistakes, under which it is to be apprehended too many labour. The Scribes were the Doctors and Expounders of the *Jewish* Law, which was given by God himself to the *Jews*. The Pharisees were those who pretended to a more than ordinary Strictness in the Observance of this Law, scrupulously observing even the lesser Matters of it in paying Tythes of *Mint Annis* and *Cummin*. They fasted often, and made long Prayers. They gave Alms, and carried with them an Appearance of strict Morality and Piety, yet were often severely reprehended, and condemned by our Blessed Saviour, who likewise assures us, that unless our Righteousness exceeds theirs, we shall never gain Heaven. After this positive Assertion of Truth itself, can we think a slight or superficial Observance of our Duty will be sufficient to save our Souls ? This is
that

that Dangerous Mistake we are here cautioned against; the wrong Notions we must take Care not to run away with, and deceive ourselves. In order to this let us consider the Righteousness of the Pharisees, wherein it was defective, and upon what Account, notwithstanding their Fasts and long Prayers, their Alms, and scrupulously paying Tythes of the smallest Herbs, they were condemned. This will give us a clear Light how, and in what Manner our Righteousness must exceed and go beyond theirs.

The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees were extremely deficient in several capital Points. They seemed to affect a strict Observance of many lesser and ceremonial Parts of the *Jewish* Law; in washing their Hands before they eat, in paying Tythes, and the like, while they neglected those greater and more essential Points, Justice and Judgement, Mercy and Charity, for which they are often and severely reproved by our Saviour in the holy Gospels. They fasted often, and made long Prayers; but the Merit of these pious Exercises was lost by their Hypocrisy and Pride, and ambitious Desire of gaining the Praises of Men. To be esteemed and preferred before others was the Motive and End of these Actions. This clearly appears from what we read of them in the Scriptures. They were void of true Charity, contemning and despising all others as less holy than themselves; and wresting the Law, of which they were the Expounders;

pounders, to a wrong Sense, to justify that Malice and Hatred they bore to their Enemies. This our Blessed Saviour plainly intimates in his Sermon on the Mount, where he says: *You have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy, St. Matt. v.* To love our Neighbour is a Precept of the *Mosaick Law*, wherein it is said, *Thou shalt love thy Friend as thyself, Levit. xix.* But to hate our Enemies was a wicked Inference, a false Gloss the Scribes and Pharisees put upon that Text. To destroy which false Doctrine, and contrary to it, our Divine Master, Jesus Christ, tells us, that we must love not only our Friends, but likewise our Enemies, and that unless we do so, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This Righteousness, therefore, of the Scribes and Pharisees, however bright and glaring it might appear in the sight of men, was no more than empty Show, a vain external Appearance; and wanted that which alone could stamp a Value upon what they did, and make it acceptable to God, namely, Purity of Intention, and seeking only the Honour and and Glory of God in what they did. This was the great and principal Defect in the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and for which they were condemned by our Blessed Saviour. Their Condemnation ought to be our Instruction, and for this our Divine Master mentions it, that we may take care and not deceive ourselves. He has given us a more holy, and more perfect

fect Law, and requires that we observe it faithfully and exactly in all its essential Points. If we do not, we involve ourselves in the Guilt, and must expect to share in the Punishment denounced against the Pharisees, and with them to be excluded the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us now particularly consider, how, and in what Manner, or in what our Righteousness is to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. If the great Defect of their Righteousness was a Want of pure Intention, seeking not the Honour of God, but their own Praise, and to gain the Esteem of Men: From hence we may easily see wherein we are to exceed them, by directing all our Actions and Exercises of Piety to the Glory of God, seeking his Honour only and not our own. This our Blessed Lord instructs us in, by mentioning several Particulars. As when we give Alms, not to do it with Pride and Ostentation, or to sound a Trumpet before us, as the Hypocrites, that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, did in the Synagogues and the Streets, that they might be honoured by Men. When we give Alms it must be in Secret, our Left-hand is not to know what our Right-hand does. Intimating that when we give Alms our Desire must be that they may be known only to God. Alms thus given in private will be most acceptable to God, and best preserve us from the Temptations of Vain-glory and Pride. And though our Blessed Saviour bids us let our Light shine before Men that they may see our good Works and glorify

glorify our Father, who is in Heaven ; yet this may be easily reconciled with what he here says of giving Alms in private. St. *Gregory* in one of his *Homilies*, admirably reconciles the seeming Contradiction, when he says, our good Works are so to be done in Publick, that our Neighbour may be edified, and yet by a pure Intention, seeking only the Glory of God, and that they may be regarded only by him, be, as it were private. When we pray we are not to affect to do it, like the Pharisees in the Corners of Streets, that is, to be seen of Men, but privately in our Closets, where God alone may see us. Our Blessed Lord speaks here of private Prayers and Devotions, and not of the publick Worship of God, on certain Days appointed and set apart for that Purpose ; and wherein we are to avoid all Ostentation, or desire to be taken Notice of, but not so as to be ashamed of appearing at the publick Service of the Church, but that frequenting the publick Service of God, we may give Edification to our Neighbour. The Pharisees fasted often nor does our Blessed Saviour condemn them for fasting ; but for their hypocritical and affected Manner of fasting, thereby to be esteemed as Persons of more than ordinary Mortification and Self-denial. Fasting is a Duty incumbent on Christians ; but in our Fasts we must observe a true penitential Spirit, seeking thereby the Pardon of our Sins, to mortify the Flesh, and tame irregular and inordinate Passions ; and this without valuing ourselves, or desiring to be valued on Account
of

of such external Exercises of Mortification. But that wherein the Righteousness of Christians is principally to exceed the Pharisees, and wherein shines the peculiar Excellence, and sublime Perfection of the Christian Institute, is that unbounded, universal Precept of Charity, by which we are obliged to love all Mankind, not only our Parents, Relations, Friends and Neighbours, but every one, without Exception, even our Enemies, and do Good to those who hate us, that we may in some Measure be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect. We must not be angry with our Neighbour in an unreasonable Manner, nor call him injurious Names, or treat him with Scorn and Contempt. He is our Brother, we all coming from God, our common Father and Creator, and as our Brother we must love him, and if he has any ways offended us, we must sincerely forgive him. If we have injured him, we must make Satisfaction, and be reconciled to him. This Precept of Charity is so strict, and so obligatory, that our Saviour bids us even leave our Gifts at the Altar, and be first reconciled with our Brother, if we are at any Variance with him. If we cannot make a personal Reconciliation, by Reason of Absence, or some other lawful Impediment, we must, at least, in our Hearts be sincerely reconciled by forgiving those who may have injured or offended us; nor must we expect Forgiveness of God, unless we forgive others: For this Reason we are taught to say, in the *Lora's*
Prayer:

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Prayer : Forgive us our *Trespases*, as we forgive them who trespass against; and in Proportion to what we forgive others, must expect Forgiveness from God. We must then forgive, if we desire to be forgiven, and by this shew that our Righteousness does exceed that of the Pharisees, which unless we do, we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Saviour of the World who camest not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to perfect them. Thou hast told us what Observance thou requirest; that we observe thy Law in a more perfect Manner than the Scribes and Pharisees did the Law of *Moses*. Give me Grace to comply with my Duty. Let me never be content with any small Degree of Virtue, but daily strive to advance more and more. O may I serve thee with Zeal and Fervour, and in such a Manner as may please thee, that I may receive from thee the glorious Rewards thou hast promised, and be admitted into thy Kingdom of Heaven.

O thou Author of all Virtue and Perfection, indue my Soul with those Virtues which may make me acceptable to thee. O that my Soul might continually burn in the Flames of a most ardent Charity and Love of thee. Thou camest Divine Redeemer, to bring this holy Fire upon Earth, and desirest nothing more than it should burn. May it burn up, and consume all Coldness,

ness, Lukewarmness and Indifference in thy Service, that I may serve thee with a constant Fervour, and daily strive to serve thee better and to love thee more and more

O Jesus, my God, as I desire to love thee above all other Things, and all other Things in thee, and for thee, I will love my Neighbour as myself. Blessed be thy Name, O God of Love and Bounty, for this sweet Commandment of Love. For Love of thee, I do freely and sincerely forgive every one who may have injured or offended me. I am ready and willing to be reconciled, and to make Satisfaction to every one whom I may have offended. May I never be at Variance with any one, but live and die in Peace and Charity with all Mankind.

Sixth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Mark*, viii. 1.

IN those Days again when there was a great Multitude, and had nothing to eat : Calling his Disciples together, he saith to them : 2. I have Compassion on the Multitude, for behold they have now been with me three Days and have nothing to eat. 3. And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the Way, for some of them came from afar off. 4. And his Disciples answered him : From whence can any one fill them here with Bread in the Wilderness ? 5. And he asked them : how many Loaves have ye ? Who said, Seven. 6. And he commanded the Multitude to place themselves on the Ground. And taking the seven Loaves, giving Thanks, he broke, and gave to his Disciples for to set before them, and they set them before the People. 7. And they had a few

little

little Fishes ; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. 8. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the Fragments, seven Baskets. 9. And they who had eaten were about four thousand ; and he sent them away.

REFLECTIONS.

The wonderful Miracle which makes the Subject of this Day's Gospel, is one of those which not only fills us with Admiration when we read or hear of it ; but is likewise Matter of excellent and useful Instruction to us. If we admire therein the Bounty of Jesus, in having Compassion on the Multitude. If we are lost in Wonder, considering him feeding so great a Number with so small a Quantity of Provision. If he multiplied seven Loaves, and a few small Fishes in such a Manner as to satisfy four thousand Men, and fill seven Baskets with the remaining Fragments, how conspicuous is his Goodness, amazing his Power ? But we are not to rest here, no : Let us carry our pious Thoughts further, and attend to the practical Instructions here given us, and learn a Duty which is incumbent upon us, as his Disciples and Followers ; so necessary as to deserve our most serious Attention. *I have Compassion on the Multitude*, says the holy Jesus. What Goodness and Condescension appear in this tender Expression ! The devout Multitude had attended upon his divine Sermons three Days,
and

and had nothing to eat. He would not send them away fasting, least they should faint in the Way. *I have Compassion on the Multitude.* If Jesus Christ thus expressed his Pity and Concern for those People, he thereby teaches us that we also ought to have Compassion on our Neighbour, and on one another. And what he said on another Occasion, *I have given you an Example*, St. John, xiii. is applicable here. Christ shews himself compassionate, and so must we. Compassion is a Duty inseparable from our Character of Christians. Let us then consider first, what it is, and wherein it consists. Secondly how indispensably we are obliged to it. Excellent Subject for our moral Reflections this Day.

Compassion is generally esteemed to consist in a tender Regard to the Misfortunes and Afflictions of another. A being affected with Pity and Concern for the Miserable, or those who are labouring under any grievous Calamity. This is one great and necessary Part of it, but far from being the Whole, or wherein alone it consists. It is better and more fully described by a noble Sympathy we have with whatever relates to our Neighbour. It teaches us to rejoice with him in his Prosperity, and to mourn with him in his Adversity. It forbids saying or doing any Thing that may add to his Trouble or disturb his Peace and Quiet. It regulates not only our Actions, but our Words and Thoughts in his Regard. It makes us prompt and ready to help and assist him, and to shew
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a benevolent Attention to him, however great the Difference of Fortune between us may be. But if Compassion regards thus our Neighbour, with Relation to that mutual Connection we have with each other, it more particularly displays itself towards the Miserable, those who labour under Calamity and Affliction. The Calamities and Misfortunes of this Life, are so many and various, that we can never miss Objects of Compassion. If we consider how many there are labouring under the Hardships of Want and Indigence. If we consider the many Casualties which happen to the Goods and Persons of our Neighbours, we shall find frequent Occasions of shewing a compassionate Temper, and wherein, not to be affected must argue us as forgetful of the Dictates of common Humanity, as of the Precepts of our holy Religion. And here we must not deceive ourselves, or think we are compassionate by a few verbal Expressions, or Show of Pity only. To be truly compassionate is to help and relieve those who are in Affliction or Want, according to our Power and Ability. And, after the Example of our Blessed Saviour, to prevent, as it were, in some Measure, the Wants and Necessities of others by a timely Assistance. Our Blessed Lord did not stay till he heard the poor People complain, or cry out for Want of Refreshment. He knew the Want they laboured under after three Days having nothing to eat; and therefore said to his Disciples: *Misereor super turbam. I have Pity on the Multi-*

Multitude. The Knowledge of their Wants raised his Pity, and pleaded powerfully in their Behalf. To a truly compassionate Christian to know of, or behold a miserable Object is enough. His Bowels are moved, and he immediately considers how, and in what Manner he may relieve them. His Concern is heightened by a just and pious Reflection, that their Case might have been his own, that it is not, is owing to the Goodness and Bounty of God, who has made the Difference. How far from any Thing of this truly benevolent Spirit are those hard-hearted insensible People, who can behold the Poor and miserable, and not be in the least touched, nor care to part with any Thing for their Relief, though the twentieth Part of what they sling away in sinful Pride and Luxury would free many from being miserable, and make them comfortably happy.

If Compassion thus shews itself with Regard to the corporal Wants or Misfortunes of others, it equally shews itself in Relation to his natural or moral Misfortunes, that is their Weaknesses, and the natural Infirmities of their Dispositions, or Minds, which are proper Objects of this Christian Virtue. Thus, if at any Time, we meet with, or are obliged to converse with those who are weak, passionate, angry, fretful and uneasy in their Temper; with those who are wanting in Prudence, Judgment and good Sense, we are not to despise or condemn them. No; they deserve and ought to have our Pity and Compassion, which

is to be shewn by a mild and meek Behaviour towards them, bearing with, and making Allowances for them : Always ready to lend a helping Hand to counsel, advise and assist them. Even those who are unhappily of a vicious Nature and Inclination are to be pitied, and the more so because their Misfortunes, as such, are more deplorable. Nor can our Compassion ever be more justly shewn, or better placed ; for, though Sinners, they cease not to be our Neighbour, and are our Brethren in Christ. To consider Sinners as such, and not to pity those who live in the unhappy State of Sin, is to fall greatly short of that compassionate Temper so essential to the Character of a good Christian. Who can behold a Soul redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus trampling on his sacred Blood, and running headlong to eternal Perdition, and not be moved ? To see a Man just running to a Precipice, ignorant of the Danger, and wherein he must inevitably perish, if not timely advised and prevented, and not to do it, is barbarous ; to let him perish without any Concern, is shocking and unnatural. Compassion then for unhappy Sinners will put us upon endeavouring all we can, within our proper Sphere, to reclaim them. If our Endeavours are unsuccessful, to afford them our Pity, and fervent Prayers, that they may see their Danger before it is too late,

St. Paul, when he bids us *weep with them that weep*, bids us likewise *rejoice with them who rejoice*. Rom. xii. And though to rejoice is opposite

to Mourning ; yet, when that Mourning proceeds from a compassionate Regard we have for others, it naturally turns into Joy, when the Subject of Concern is changed and taken away. Hence, if we are to sympathize with a suffering Neighbour, and bear a Part with him in his Troubles, we may, and ought to rejoice with him in his Prosperity, when the Scene is changed, his Tears wiped away, and Joy succeeds to Sorrow ; for we are to be equally affected with his good and bad Fortune, and not to be so is a Proof that we have very narrow and imperfect Notions of our Christian Duties, and do not rightly comprehend the Obligations we lie under.

To compassionate our Neighbour is not to be esteemed an Advice, or Counsel only. It is a Precept, a Command laid upon us by our Divine Master. It is likewise observing that great Law of Nature, to do as we would be done by. We all naturally desire to find Compassion from others ; and therefore ought to shew it to others, and thereby to copy after the Example of our Blessed Saviour. *Miserere super Turbam. I have Compassion on the Multitude.* The Obligation of this Duty is further enforced by *Jesus Christ* in the Parable of the good Samaritan, who shewed Compassion to the poor, wounded Man, and bidding the Lawyer go, and do likewise. What was said to him is said to all Christians, and lays upon them an equal Obligation to be charitable and compassionate : But nothing makes this
more

more clear, too clear to be doubted of, than the Account our Blessed Lord himself gives of what will pass at the last Day, and is a demonstrative Proof that Compassion is a Duty to which we are indispensably obliged. The happy Sentence which will then be pronounced on the Just, will be the Effect of their compassionate Charity to the Poor and Needy, to those in Misery and Affliction. On the contrary, that terrible *Discedite; depart from me*, which will strike the Wicked down to the Torments of Hell, will be thundered against them for their Hardheartedness, and Want of Pity for their poor and suffering Neighbours. The unfortunate *Dives*, less compassionate than his Dogs, found a dismal Transition from his purple and fine Linen, from his luxurious Feasts, to Fire and Flames, where in vain he begged for a Drop of water to cool his Tongue. He who had refused poor *Lazarus* the Crumbs which fell from his Table. This is not only to be applied to the Rich, to those who have it entirely in their Power to pity and relieve the Poor. The Rich are not alone those who are here concerned, and only liable to the threatned Punishment of Judgment without Mercy, to those who have not shewn Mercy. Those of a lower Rank and Station, the Poor themselves are concerned, and have a proportionable Share, since every one in his different Degree is bound to pity and compassionate, and to relieve the Miserable according to his Ability. I mention the Poor, for though they may be Objects of

Pity themselves, yet they are obliged to have mutual Compassion one for another. And it is proper they be told that they transgress this Command when they murmur and repine, are discontented and envious to see others relieved, or think they are more favoured than themselves. Thus no Christian of whatever Rank, high or low, rich or poor, is exempted from this Duty. It includes every one, and every one is indispensably obliged to it. From what has been said we may see how closely our own Interest is connected with our Duty, that by neglecting one, we neglect the other. We have Reason then to hearken to the instructive Lesson of this Day's Gospel, and to practice it, that we may find Mercy and Compassion from God, who has promised to shew it to us, if we shew it to others.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

How tender and compassionate art thou, Divine Redeemer of Mankind ! Thou beholdest our Necessities, and art always ready and willing to relieve them. Thou hast given us a Proof of it in miraculously feeding four thousand Men with seven Loaves, and a few small Fishes. They had waited upon thee three Days, and had nothing to eat ; but thou wouldst not send them away fasting. By a wonderful and beneficent Miracle, thou didst relieve their Wants, and reward them for their Affection and Devotion to thee.

Have

Have the same Pity and Compassion, dear Lord, for me a poor Sinner in great Want and Necessity. O feed my Soul with the divine Nourishment of thy holy Grace, that I may never grow faint or tire in the Exercise of Virtue and the Love of thee. O that I could love thee my sweet Saviour as I ought, and as thou deservest ! O that I were truly sensible of thy Love to me, and did endeavour to be truly grateful to thee for the same.

Give me likewise, dear Lord, a Spirit of Charity whereby I may be touched with a tender Sense and Compassion of my Neighbours Wants, and readily assist them to the utmost of my Power. Shall I call myself a Disciple of thine, and refuse to help the Poor and Needy. No, I will rather deny myself, and suffer some Inconvenience, to assist those in Want. I will have Compassion of others, that thou may'st have Compassion on me.

Seventh *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* vii. 15.

BE W A R E of false Prophets, who come to you in the Cloathing of Sheep, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves. 16. By their Fruits you shall know them. Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles. 17. Even so, every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit, and the evil Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit. Neither can an evil Tree bring forth good Fruit. 18. A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit. 19. Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the Fire. 20. Wherefore, by their Fruits you shall know them. 21. Not every one that saith to me, *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven : But he that doth the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

R E-

R E F L E C T I O N S.

In this Gospel Jesus Christ gives a Caution to his Disciples and all his Followers against false Prophets and Teachers of false Doctrines ; and gives an excellent and certain Rule by which such may be discovered. Hypocrites and false Teachers may dissemble for some Time, and by a specious Outside, an Appearance, like the Pharisees, of a more than ordinary Sanctity, deceive simple and unguarded Souls ; but the false Cloathing will soon appear, and their Intention to draw away Christ's Sheep from his Fold, the Catholick Church, be discovered. All outward Appearances of Sanctity, Shews of rigorous Austerities, pretended Zeal, are much to be suspected, if not accompanied with sound Doctrine, Humility and Submission to the Church, and her lawful Pastors, who are the only lawful and appointed Shepherds to take Care of the Flock, that is, the Faithful committed to their, and only their Care. Whoever resists, or draws himself from the Obedience and Submission due to the Church and her Pastors, let his Exterieur be never so specious and fine, it is no more than Sheep's Cloathing. He is inwardly a ravenous Wolf, who seeks, by separating the Sheep from their Shepherds, to induce them to follow him, that so he may devour them. But they may easily be discovered by attending to the Rule which our Blessed Lord gives, saying : *By their*

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Fruits you shall know them. Whoever causes Schisms and Divisions, and refuses to submit to lawful Authority shews the bad Fruits of Stubbornness, Contention and Disobedience, that he is a false Prophet, and as such to be avoided. Holy Men inspired by God, and called by him to do Good in the Reformation of others, do it in a Way of Submission to the Authority of God's holy Church to whom they entirely submit themselves, and exhort others so to do. What the Church approves and teaches, they approve and believe. What the Church condemns they condemn, and are studious to maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. *Ephes. iv.* Such are true Prophets whom we may believe. Such are to be hearkened to, and no others.

But it is not only with Regard to false Prophets, our Blessed Saviour here instructs and gives us a Rule by which we may discover them. He likewise cautions us against ourselves by mistaken Notions in the practical Part of our Duty. By an admirable Similitude of good and bad Trees, and the different Fruit they bear, gives us to understand, that by the Fruit we produce of good or evil Works, we shew whether we are good Christians, good Trees, bringing forth good Fruit in a holy Life and Conversation; or bad Christians, bad Trees producing the bad Fruit of Sin and Iniquity. By the Rule we are to judge of false Prophets, *by their Fruits you shall know them,* by the same we may judge of ourselves. If we
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are good Christians, true Disciples of Jesus Christ, we shall make it appear so, by living up to the pure and holy Maxims of that Gospel we profess to believe. If we do not, it is manifest we are only Christians in Name. If our Lives are irregular and wicked : If we wilfully transgress the Commandments of God, and pay no Regard to his holy Law. What are we other than bad Trees doomed to be cut down and cast into the Fire ! This deserves our serious Attention, that we may not deceive ourselves. From hence we may pass a true Judgment on ourselves whom we belong to, by the good or bad Fruit we bring forth ; and to whom we hearken, to God, or the Devil, the World and the Flesh. If we hearken to these we shall unhappily be deceived by false Prophets, for such they truly are and seek our Ruin. The Devil endeavours to draw us into a State of Negligence and Indifference for the Things of God, and what concerns our Salvation. But do we not know that he is a Liar, and the Father of Lies ; and have we not Reason then to be aware of his flattering Lies and Deceits ? The World is a false Teacher, it promises a great many fine Things, seemingly so, but the End of them is Death. The Flesh is a wretched deceitful Flatterer, seeking to allure and cheat us with its criminal and forbidden Pleasures, which terminate in everlasting Woe. How careful then ought every Christian to be not to hearken to, or entertain them, as inevitable Destruction

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tion attends all who let themselves be deceived by them.

The better to understand this and that it may make a deeper Impression on our Mind, let us seriously consider what our Blessed Lord says, in the Conclusion of this Day's Gospel: *Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: But he that doth the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* What our Saviour here says deserves our most serious Attention, and is a plain Proof, Christians, how much we deceive ourselves, or rather permit ourselves to be imposed on by the Devil, when we content ourselves with a meer outward Profession of the Christian Catholick Faith, but take no Care to live suitably to that Profession, and shew by Deeds that we really are what we call ourselves in Words. From what Jesus Christ here asserts, and in plain Terms, it is evident, that not every one who says, *Lord, Lord*, by external Profession shall be saved; but only those, who like good Trees bring forth the good Fruit required. It is not enough to call ourselves Christians; we must live as becomes Christians, according to the Rules of the Gospel, or we shall find our Hopes of Heaven deceive us. Wicked Men, Sinners, Hereticks and Schismaticks may cry out one Day, *Lord, Lord*, but in vain; for while they pretend to carry his holy Name, they dishonour it by their wicked Lives; by their false Doctrines, Schisms, and Divisions.

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If God bestows upon us extraordinary Parts and Talents, and we do not make a right Use of them : If we grow proud and conceited, self-willed and disobedient ; endeavour to make ourselves Heads of a Party, cause Divisions, and trouble the Peace of God's Church. We may cry *Lord, Lord*, and boast of ourselves, and of what we have done ; but at that Day when we shall be judged and rewarded according to our Works, Christ will say to us : *Depart from me you that work Iniquity*, St. Matt. vii. We have Reason then to take Care that our Hopes of eternal Life are grounded upon our Obedience to God's Law, and doing his holy Will, which is, *that we live soberly and justly and godly in this World*, Tit. ii. Soberly in Regard of ourselves, mortifying and not indulging sensual and sinful Inclinations. Justly with Respect to our Neighbours, injuring no one, wishing well to every one, and observing strict Justice in all our Dealings with others. Godly, that is piously, in a strict Observance of all religious Duties, according to the Commands of God and his Church : *That we hold fast the true Faith once delivered to the Saints*, St. Jude iii. *and that we maintain the Unity of this Faith in the Bond of Peace*, Ephes. iv. This is the Will of our Father who is in Heaven, and by this we shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and not otherwise. If we seriously consider what the Kingdom of Heaven is, and the Happiness of it, we shall not, surely, hesitate a Moment about the Choice

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we are to make. It will not seem much to comply with the Conditions required, so easy, so just and so reasonable in themselves; the Observance of which will procure us the glorious Rewards of eternal Happiness and Bliss.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O my God! give me Grace to do thy holy Will in all Things. Thou hast called me to the Knowledge of the true Faith. Thou hast made me a Member of thy Holy Catholick Church. Perfect, O Lord, what thou hast begun, and grant that I may live as a true Servant of thine. As my Faith is sound, may my Life be holy. May I never dishonour my Christian Faith, by an unchristian Life. Let me never be deceived by vain Hopes, or a false Presumption; nor so rely upon my Faith, and an outward Profession of thy Name, as to neglect to do thy Will; but to strive by good Works to make my Calling and Election sure. 2 Pet. i.

O Jesus, my dear and sovereign Lord and Master! deliver me from so great a Folly as to neglect to love and serve thee. It is my Interest no less than my Duty, and all my Happiness depends upon it. May I love thee, O Lord, but at the same Time have an awful Fear of thy Judgments, that I may experience the Sweetness of thy Mercies, which thou hast laid up for them who fear thee. May I never hear from thee that terrible Sentence,
Depart

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Depart from me you Workers of Iniquity; nor be deprived of the Enjoyment of thee, wherein alone all Happiness consists.

Sanctify my Heart, dearest Lord, and fill it with an ardent Love of thee. Cleanse it from all sinful and worldly Affections, that it may be a fit Habitation for thee. Do thou totally possess it, and transform it totally in thee. O Light, which illuminates every one, who cometh into this World, dissipate all Darkness in my Soul, that I may see thee, and seeing thee may love thee. O may I love thee, sweetest Jesus, above Heaven and Earth, and all that is therein. Be thou the whole Intention, and only Desire of my Heart. May I meditate upon thee, and upon thy holy Law, Day and Night, and place all my Delight therein.

Eighth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Luke* xvi. 1.

AND he said also to his Disciples : There was a certain rich Man who had a Steward : And the same was accused to him, that he had wasted his Goods. 2. And he called him, and said to him : How is it that I hear this of thee ? Give an Account of thy Stewardship ; for now thou can'st be Steward no longer. 3. And the Steward said within himself : What shall I do, because my Lord taketh away from me the Stewardship ? To dig I am not able ; to beg, I am ashamed. 4. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses. 5. Therefore calling together every one of his Lord's Debtors, he said to the first : How much dost thou owe my Lord ? 6. But he said : An hundred Barrels of
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of Oil. And he said to him : Take thy Bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7. Then he said to another : And how much dost thou owe ? Who said : An hundred Quarters of Wheat. He said unto him : Take thy Bill and write eighty. 8. And the Lord commendeth the unjust Steward, for as much as he had done wisely : For the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light. 9. And I say unto you : Make unto you Friends of the Mammon of Iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting Dwellings.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

The Parable in this Gospel is very significant and instructive : It puts us in mind of the great Account we shall, one Day, be called upon to render to God, who is our great and sovereign Lord, whose Stewards we are, and who has entrusted us with his Goods : In the Management of which, it is to be feared there are many of whom Complaints may be made that they waste their Lord's Goods. As this concerns every Christian, every one without Exception, so every one will, upon Consideration find himself too much interested to be negligent in a Matter of so great Importance. In order to have a right Notion of this, let us reflect upon those Goods, what they are, and the Nature of them, which our great Master has entrusted us with. They may be considered

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ed as Goods of Nature, of Fortune and of Grace. It is an assured Truth that we have nothing of our own : Whatever we have we received from him, and in Trust to make a good Use of, and to improve, not to waste or dissipate them.

The Goods of Nature, that is, those natural Endowments, Parts or Talents we have, and given to us by God, who has bestowed them upon us, that we might make a right Use of them, in promoting his Honour and Glory, and the Good of others. The temporal Blessings we enjoy, our Health and Strength, with the Goods of Fortune, as Riches and Plenty, are entrusted to our Care, and to enable us to help and assist our Neighbour, to relieve the Poor, and those in Want and Indigence. The Goods of Grace are the Happiness of being Christians, Members of Christ's mystical Body, the Holy Catholick Church ; the Inspirations of God's holy Spirit ; his divine Calls ; the Use of the holy Sacraments, and the Opportunities we enjoy of serving God : These are bestowed upon us in order to work out our Salvation by performing the Duty of careful Stewards and faithful Servants, that no Complaint may be made against us. These are the Goods we are entrusted with, and we are strictly obliged diligently to improve what is thus committed to our Charge, that we may not be accused by our own Consciences, or by others as wasting and dissipating the Goods of our Lord This may be done, and alas ! there is too great Reason

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son to apprehend they are wasted and dissipated by many Christians. To make an ill Use of what we have received, is to abuse our Talents. To be proud, self-conceited, and arrogant on the Account of natural Parts, or acquired Knowledge, is to make a wrong Use of those Goods, and will be esteemed by God, as wasting and dissipating them. To employ our Wit in prophane and obscene Jokes and Jest: To make the solemn Service of the Church, her established holy Rites and Ceremonies, the Subject of our Mirth and Raillery: To employ our Learning and Knowledge in propagating and defending Errour, Heresy and novel Opinions against and contrary to the Decisions of the Catholick Church: Proudly to contemn and despise those who may be less learned than ourselves, and have not had an equal Advantage of a liberal Education; to endeavour to impose upon their Simplicity and Weakness, and by subtle Artifices to corrupt their Faith and their Morals, is in a notorious Manner to waste and dissipate the Talents bestowed upon us. To consume our Health and to ruin our Constitution by Excess and Debauchery, is truly to dissipate and waste those valuable Goods. To spend our Riches and the Goods of Fortune in Pride and Vanity, Luxury and Extravagancy; to be covetous and hard-hearted: to refuse to help and assist the Poor and Needy, is to dissipate and sling away our Lord's Money. To neglect and slight the great Affair of our Salvation; to be cold, lukewarm and
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indifferent in the Service of God ; to slight his Calls and holy Inspirations ; to neglect the holy Exercises of Religion, Prayer, the Sacraments, and hearing the Word of God, is to make a very ill Use of those spiritual Goods and Graces we have received. We shew ourselves thereby unjust Stewards ; nor will our Injustice pass without Complaints and a due Punishment.

The Lord, in the Gospel, said to his unjust Steward : *Give an Account of thy Stewardship ; for now thou canst be Steward no longer.* The same will God say, one Day, to every one of us ; he will call us to give a strict Account of our respective Stewardships. When we come to die, at that awful Period of Time, which will put an End to Time with us, and launch us into Eternity, then we must give an exact Account of our whole Lives, of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions. When Death comes, we can be no longer Stewards. We must then stand or fall as we are able to make up our Accounts. You must die, Christian ; you must be no longer Steward. This will be a terrible Hearing to all willful Sinners who have died in their Sins ; who have been unfaithful careless Stewards, and have wasted their Master's Goods. Alas ! what Account can be given of all that precious Time squandered away in idle, vain and sinful Amusements and Diversions ? In hunting after the Honours, Riches and Pleasures of this World ? All this will prove to have been so much of our Lord's Goods wasted and lost, and will not be admitted

admitted into our Accounts. What will those be able to say, who here spend their Riches in Vanity and Extravagance? What will they answer to the Complaints of the Poor accusing them of wasting that in Luxury and Prodigality which was given to them for the Relief of those in Want? All this will be condemned as an unjust and criminal Dissipation of what was their Lord's. What Account will the cold, tepid and negligent Christian be able to give of his Stewardship? Alas! he will be proved guilty, to have dissipated and wasted the best Part of those Goods committed to him by his Lord. His extream Negligence in the Business of Heaven; his indifference for advancing in Virtue; and the ill Use he made of all those excellent Means which were afforded him to secure his Salvation, will appear against him, and accuse him for wasting his Master's Goods. He can be no longer Steward, and must undergo the rigorous, but just, Punishment of his Negligence and Injustice.

Let us seriously consider these Things now while we have Time, and have Opportunity to provide for ourselves. Wise and prudent Stewards look often into their Accounts, that they may see how they stand, and keep a just Ballance, which will enable them, when called upon, to give in their Accounts fair and just. We ought, Christians, to do the same, by frequently looking into and examining our spiritual Affairs, that we may see how Accounts stand between God and our Souls:

That

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That by Repentance and Amendment we may be able to keep a right Ballance between God as Creditor, and ourselves, as Debtors. This is the only Way to give a good Account of our Stewardship. Then we shall have nothing to fear or apprehend, when it shall be said to us, at the Hour of Death, *You can be no longer Steward.* If we have been careless and negligent, we may learn from the policy of the unjust Steward what we are to do, and how to provide for ourselves. Our blessed Lord commends not his Fraud and Deceit, but his Policy and Forecast, and infers from thence that the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light. Therefore, says *Jesus Christ, Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Iniquity.* Be like wise Men, who are most solicitous where their greatest Interest is concerned. Eternal Happiness is that which concerns us most; and by making a good Use of our Riches and those worldly Goods we possess. By Acts of Charity to the Poor, we make ourselves Friends, and by them shall be received into the eternal Mansions of Heaven, when we come to die, and quit this World. Riches are here stiled the Mammon of Iniquity, not, that they are evil of themselves, or have any intrinsick Malice; but because they are too often the Occasion of Evil, by being immoderately affected, unjustly acquired, and made an ill Use of. Of themselves they are innocent and harmless, and using them right will be extreamly serviceable

in obtaining Heaven. To this right Use of them, our blessed Lord exhorts us to, and that we should labour in the Service of God with as much Care, Diligence and Industry: With the same Prudence and Forecaſt to ſave our Souls, as worldly minded Men do in their temporal Concerns and Intereſt. That being found faithful here, in a few Things, we may hereafter be made Rulers over many Things, and enter into the Joy of our Lord, *St. Matt.* xxv.

ASPIRATIONS.

O thou ſovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, whoſe Servants and Stewards we are all! Thou haſt been infinitely good and bountiful to me. Many are the Gifts and Graces thou haſt beſtowed upon me. I acknowledge, O Lord, that they are not mine. I have them not of myſelf: They are thine, from whom every good and perfect Thing comes. Thou haſt given them to me that I ſhould be faithful, and uſe them to thy Honour and Glory. Help me then, O my God, to answer that End. Let me never diſſipate nor waſte them, that no Complaints may be brought againſt me.

Ah, my Lord and my God! when ſhall I be ſo happy as to be thus wiſe and prudent? When ſhall I totally and entirely dedicate my ſelf to thy Service, and ſeek for nothing but to pleaſe thee? O my dear Lord and Maſter! have I not Reaſon to be aſhamed and confounded,

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ed when I consider with how much unwearyed Care and Diligence the World is followed after, and served, though it affords nothing worth the least Concern; and how slothful and backward I am in serving thee, who art the best of Masters, and whose Rewards, like thyself, are infinite, and incomprehensible? Correct this Folly, dear Lord, and open my Eyes, that I may perfectly see, that my only and true Interest is to love and serve thee. May I be a wise and prudent Steward, and make a right Use of every Thing thou hast conferred upon me. May I daily improve the Talents thou hast entrusted me with, and as a good and faithful Servant be accepted by thee.

Ninth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St *Luke* xix. 41.

AND when he drew near, seeing the City,
he wept over it, saying: 42. If thou
hadst also known, and that in this Day, the
Things that are to thy Peace: But now they
are hidden from thine Eyes. 43. For the
Days shall come upon thee; and thy Enemies
shall cast a Trench about thee and compass
thee round, and streighten thee on every Side.
44. And beat thee flat to the Ground, and thy
Children who are in thee: And they shall not
leave in thee a Stone upon a Stone; because
thou hast not known the Time of thy Visita-
tion. 45. And entering into the Temple, he
began to cast out them that sold therein, and
them that bought. 46. Saying to them: It is
written, that my House is the House of Prayer
But

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But you have made it a Den of Thieves. 47.
And he was teaching daily in the Temple.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

That Jesus Christ should weep over the City of *Jerusalem*, is as evident a Proof of his Mercy and Goodness, as the severe Punishment he denounced against it, is a convincing Proof of his Justice. All the Passages of our Saviour's Life upon Earth, and which are recorded in the sacred Oracles, are so many instructive Lessons, and as such, are proposed to our Consideration: From what is related in the Gospel for this *Sunday*, we may learn what will be of great Advantage to us, if we are not wanting to ourselves. The severe Threats here pronounced by our Lord against the obstinate *Jews* will be of singular Benefit to us Christians, if from thence we are as willing to comply with, as it is easy to learn our Duty therein. The Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Dispersion of that People, once the Favourites of Heaven, and the Cause of the sad Calamity here mentioned, may serve to give us a right Idea of the terrible Effects of neglecting the Calls of God, and of continuing obstinate in Sin, and will abundantly justify the Ways of God to Men, by shewing evidently, that whoever perishes, perishes by his own Fault. To set this Matter in a clear Light, we will consider the Destruction of *Jerusalem* as applicable to Christians, and as a figurative Representation
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of that more terrible Destruction which will overtake Sinners. To this we will add an Enquiry into the Cause of this sad Calamity, and offer some Means by which it may be avoided.

In considering the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, two Things occur worthy our Notice. Christ foretelling it, and the exact fulfilling of it. The Evangelist tells us, that as Christ drew near to *Jerusalem*, he wept over it. He foresaw the terrible Calamity, which hung over the Head of that unhappy People, and spoke of it with the most tender Concern and Regret. *The Days shall come upon thee, when thy Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and beat thee flat to the Ground; they shall not leave in thee a Stone upon a Stone.* A dreadful Threat from the Mouth of Truth itself; from him whose Word endures for ever. If we consider *Jerusalem* as it was then in a flourishing State, rich and powerful in its Inhabitants: The Capitol of *Judea*, of that Kingdom which God himself had established in the House of *David*, the Thought of so total a Destruction must represent the Divine Justice in all its Rigour; and which exerted itself in the Punishment of that unhappy Nation which found the Prediction verified, and by sad Experience were convinced of the Truth of what they little thought of, and less heeded, when our Blessed Saviour spoke. The Revolution of a few Years brought the *Romans* upon them, by whom *Jerusalem* was laid waste, the Temple

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burnt, and the People carried into Slavery : And ever since have remained as Vagabonds dispersed all over the Earth, a standing Monument of the Justice of Almighty God upon them.

This was the terrible Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation, foretold by our Saviour, and thus exactly fulfilled. Let us consider it now as a Figure and Representation of that more terrible Calamity which shall, one Day, fall upon Sinners, and in this Respect is applicable to Christians. The Destruction of Sinners will be infinitely more terrible ; and the Effects of it much severer than that of the *Jews*. That of the *Jews* was but temporal, and regarded only their City, their Goods and Possessions : their Liberty and their Lives ; but that of Sinners will be eternal, and relates to their Souls made miserable for ever. This is the sad Destruction denounced against Sinners, and those who continue in the Ways of Sin. Not a temporal Punishment affecting their Goods and the Things of this Life. Ah no ; it will be an everlasting one, in the endless Flames and Torments of Hell. Terrible Destruction this ! truly dreadful in its Effects ! as much exceeding that of the *Jews*, as Eternity is beyond Time. Time must, and will end. Eternity, never, never. O these awful piercing Words, never to end ! Are they not sufficient to make the most daring Sinner tremble ? Will they not convince him of that dreadful Calamity which hangs over his Head, and will soon fall upon him ? The Sinner who
will

will not be moved by this deserves to perish, and to smart under the Effects of his impious and wilful Folly.

As the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Miseries denounced by Christ against the *Jews*, are a Figure of that with which Sinners are threatned, an Enquiry into the Cause, why that once favourite Nation of God, his chosen and beloved People were so severely dealt with, will let us see the true and real Cause of the Ruin of Sinners, of their being involved in that Eternal Misery here prefigured. The Cause of those severe Threats against the *Jews* and of their being so rigorously executed, is given by Christ himself who shewing his Concern for them, and admonishing them of their impending Ruin, tells them plainly the Reason was, they would not know the Time of their Visitation. They were, indeed, the peculiar People of God, on whom he had conferred many particular Favours. He had given them a Law by the Ministry of Angels: He had promised them a Messias and Redeemer, and according to that Promise, did visit them in the Person of his beloved Son, who was born amongst them; but they would not own nor receive him when he came thus graciously to visit them. They contemned and despised Jesus Christ, rejected his holy Doctrine, blasphemed his Divine Miracles, and in Return for all his Goodness, conspired against him, and put him to a shameful and cruel Death. This drew upon them the terrible Vengeance they

were threatened with. They did not, because they would not, know the Time of their Visitation, and by thus wilfully abusing his Mercy, fell sad Victims to his Justice. The exact Parallel that may be drawn between the Behaviour of the *Jews*, and the Conduct of Sinners will evidently shew, that what caused the Destruction of the one, will also prove the Ruin of the other.

If the *Jews* were the particular People of God, on whom he had conferred several peculiar Mercies, he has shewn greater Favours to us Christians. He has given to us a more perfect and more noble Law than he gave to them. Theirs was a hard and burdensome Law, clogged with many legal Ceremonies, but to encourage the *Jews*, he promised that if they observed this Law, to bestow great temporal Blessings upon them, and make them a rich and flourishing People. To Christians, who faithfully observe the Law he has given, and who live according to the Gospel they profess, he has promised eternal Happiness and the Kingdom of Heaven; and to enable us the better to keep this holy Law, gives us the Assistance of his Grace, and has established in his Church so many excellent Means of Grace, Prayer, preaching his divine Word, and the Holy Sacraments. Thus has he graciously visited us and continues daily to do so by his Calls and Inspirations, by exhorting all Sinners to Repentance, by affording them Time and Opportunity, and mercifully bearing with them
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and waiting for their Return to him. But, alas ! like the Perverse and obstinate *Jews*, Sinners will not hear nor obey his Calls ; they will not know this Time of his Mercy, his gracious Visitation. They obstinately continue and go on in the Ways of Sin, and Disobedience to his holy Law. Though they hear and are often told of what they must expect, they will still walk on in the broad Way, pleasing themselves with the vain and sinful Amusements, the seeming Pleasures of it, till the threatned Destruction comes upon them at the Hour, and perhaps when they least expect it. It is then they will be convinced of their Folly, when it is too late to retrieve it, and find that having imitated the obstinate *Jews*, and made themselves Sharers in their Guilt, they must also share in their Punishment.

It is in our Power, Christians, to avoid this dreadful Calamity. All Sinners may, if they will, secure themselves from it. God himself, in his holy Word, points out the Means. As these severe Threats are denounced against Sinners, let Sinners cease to be Sinners, and they will be secure. Repentance and Amendment will change the Scene, and of Enemies to God make them his Friends and Favourites ; for though living in a wilful State of Sin, arms, as I may say, his Justice to take Vengeance of our Crimes ; true and sincere Repentance moves his Mercy to intervene in our Behalf, and obtain our Pardon. This the holy Precursor of Jesus exhorts us to, when he says :

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Fly from the Wrath to come. Bring forth worthy Fruits of Penance, St. Matt. iii. If we have hitherto unhappily lived in Sin, let us not defer our Repentance a single Moment longer, but now begin to redeem the Time that has been lost. Now, while God spares us, while he so graciously calls upon us, and waits for our Amendment, we have Reason to esteem every Moment of our Time, to be a Monument or Mark of his Mercy, and we may call to Mind there will come a Day when Time with us will cease to be : When what is then undone, must remain undone for ever. This is the Way to avoid *the Wrath to come*, and to secure ourselves against the impending Danger. It is an excellent Advice which the Apostle St. Paul gives, that we should *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* And of St. Peter, *Strive by good Work to make your Calling and Election sure.* Let the Beginning of these good Works be, sincerely and heartily to be sorry for our past evil ones, and to do Penance for the same. Then, whatever comes of unhappy obstinate Sinners, perishing by their own Fault, we shall be able to stand in that great and terrible Day, secure under the Mercy of God, safe from his Justice, and happy with him for ever.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Ah Jesus, dear and adorable Saviour ! compassionate Redeemer of Mankind ! Thou didst weep over the obstinate *Jews*, and didst shed thy precious Tears at the sight of their approaching Ruin and Destruction. How tender ! how compassionate art thou, Blessed Lord ! How strangely obstinate and perverse were those ungrateful Wretches ! Thou hast the same Compassion for all Sinners, and for our sakes didst shed Tears of Blood in thy dolorous and afflictive Passion. O that my Heart might dissolve in Tears of holy Contrition ; that I may grieve and be sorry for my many and grievous Sins. Who will give Water to my Head and a Fountain of Tears to my Eyes, and I will bewail Day and Night over my poor Soul, and lament that I have so often displeased and offended thee.

My God ! how patient ! how good and merciful art thou ! Every Day thou callest upon us and every Day waitest for our Return to thee. Whence is it, O thou true Life and only Happiness of my Soul ! Whence is it that thou bearest with my repeated Infidelities ? My Stubbornness and Ingratitude deserve not so much Bounty, but rather call for thy Justice to punish me, since I refuse to know the Time of thy gracious Visitation, and to understand what belongs to my Peace. Yet still thou art pleased to spare me, and ceaseest not to call up-

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on and admonish me. Ah, my sweet Redeemer ! let not all this thy Bounty be lost upon me. May I embrace this Mercy while it is offered, and no longer refuse to hear thy Voice speaking to me. My God ! I will lay Hold of this Day of Grace, this acceptable Time of working out my Salvation. I will do Penance for my past Sins, and love and faithfully serve thee for the future. Confirm and strengthen me, O God, in this my good Purpose. May I now, this Day, begin to love and serve thee as I ought ; for hitherto, alas ! I have done Nothing.

Tenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Luke* xviii. 9.

AND to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, he spoke also this Parable. 10. Two Men went up into the Temple to pray : The one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. 11. The Pharisee standing prayed thus with himself : O God, I give thee Thanks that I am not as the rest of Men, Extortioners, unjust, Adulterers, as also is this Publican. 12. I fast twice in a Week : I give Tithes of all that I possess. 13. And the Publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift his Eyes up towards Heaven ; but struck his Breast, saying : O God be merciful to me a Sinner. 14. I say unto you, this Man went down into his House, justified rather than the other : For every one that exalteth himself shall be
G 5 humbled ;

humbled ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

By the significant Parable which makes the Gospel of this *Sunday*, Christians are instructed in one of the most important Points of practical Virtue. By shewing the bad Consequences of Pride, Jesus Christ exhorts us to avoid it, and by the contrary Effects of Humility strongly recommends it to us. Two Men, says our Blessed Lord, went up into the Temple to pray. One a Pharisee, the other a Publican. They both went up to the House of God, and to pray. Pious and excellent Design ; but going up with Dispositions widely different, and praying in a very different Manner : They returned from the Temple with Effects as contrary and different. The Pharisee went up with a Spirit of Pride and Conceit of his own Virtue, and with a great Deal of Arrogance, in his Prayer boasts of his good Actions, and tells God that he was not as other Men were, nor like the Publican. Thus justifying himself, and censuring his Neighbour, he added fresh Guilt to his Pride, and went from the Temple with an additional Load of Iniquity. The Publican on the contrary went up with a deep Sense of his Sins and Unworthiness, which he expressed by standing afar off, and not daring to lift up his Eyes to Heaven, struck his Breast, saying : *God be merciful to me*

me a Sinner. Having finished his Prayer, he went down to his House justified in the Sight of God, by receiving the Mercy he implored, and obtaining the Pardon he had, with so much Humility, desired. *For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled,* says Jesus Christ; *and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* To consider this Virtue of Humility, shall be the Subject of our Reflections on the Gospel for this Sunday.

Humility, a very necessary Christian Virtue, strongly recommended by our Blessed Saviour to all his Disciples and Followers, consists in having low and humble Thoughts of ourselves; a just and good Esteem of our Neighbour; in all our Actions to seek the Glory of God, and to refer all we do to him who is the sole Author of all that is good. According to this, the humble Christian having low and moderate Thoughts of himself, is sensible of, and acknowledges that whatever natural or acquired Parts or Talents he may have, he has them not of himself, but from God, whose Gifts they are; and therefore is no Ways puffed up with Vanity and Conceit of himself. He sees and confesses his own spiritual Weakness; the Corruption of Nature, and the Violence of Passion, if not kept under by the Assistance of Grace. He is sensible of the Blindness of his natural Understanding, the Perverseness of his Will, and the frequent Failings to which he is subject. It is from hence he takes a Prospect of himself, and sees that of himself

himself he is nothing but Weakness and Frailty; hence he dares not lift up his Eyes in Pride and Self-Conceit, but turns them downwards, and readily owns that he is of no further Worth and Esteem than what he may be in God's Sight, in the Eyes of whom we can never be great unless we are truly little in our own. From this low and humble Opinion of himself and which every one ought to have, who desires to be a Disciple of Christ, the humble Christian is content that others entertain the same of him; and therefore neither desires nor seeks after the Praises of others. He is no Ways puffed up when he is commended, nor uneasy and dejected when he meets not the Approbation he really deserves. Under this happy Christian Disposition he preserves an Equanimity of Temper in all Occurrences, and discovers nothing either haughty or mean in his Conduct.

When these interiour Sentiments of Humility are solidly grounded, they will have an admirable influence on our Actions, and help us to keep the golden Mean between Pride and Baseness. They will teach us, in our exterior Carriage, not to shew a Haughtiness which scorns to stoop to a friendly charitable Office to another, because he is below us in Rank and Fortune: nor to place Humility in certain mean Actions, which may expose us to Ridicule and Contempt. This Virtue will incline us to behold with Courtesy and Affability those who are our Inferiours. And as it is a general Virtue,

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required in all, it must be found in all, not only in those whose low and humble Station may, in some Measure, secure them from the opposite Vice of Pride; but also in those of a more elevated Rank: And when it is found in the Behaviour of such, it then appears with a most amiable Lustre. As the outward Behaviour is a good Indication of the Mind; Humility will further shew itself by a yielding condescending Temper in Occasions which almost daily present themselves. In Proportion to the Degrees we possess of this excellent Virtue, we shall be less stiff in maintaining our own Opinions in Matters of Indifference, nor be much concerned when contradicted. Positiveness, and a Desire to force, as it were, every one to yield to our Sentiments, is a Note of latent Pride, however coloured over with specious Pretences. If truly humble, we shall chuse rather to triumph by yielding in Matters where Justice and Truth do not oblige us to maintain their cause.

As Humility teaches us to have moderate and low Thoughts of ourselves, it requires we should entertain, on all Occasions a just and good Esteem of our Neighbour; not to give Way to any uncharitable, censorious and contemptible Thoughts of him. To contemn or despise any one, on Account of any supposed, or real Advantage we may have over him, either in Point of natural Parts, Knowledge or Fortune, is directly contrary to this Virtue of Humility. As the great Variety of Capacities,
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of natural Parts, studied and acquired Perfections, Difference of Fortune and Station, are the Effects of that infinite Wisdom, who has ordered it in every Particular for the greater Beauty and Good of the Whole. No Man is to be contemned and despised for what he has not; and those who possess the largest Share of these Favours must look up to him who bestowed them. If he casts his Eyes upon others, it must not be, like the Pharisee, to condemn and despise the poor Publican; but in such to consider what he might have been, had not the Goodness of God to him made the Difference; and that however mean and contemptible another may appear to us, who can only behold the Exterieur, in the Eyes of him who sees the Heart, he may be many Degrees above us. To despise therefore and condemn others, to treat them with a haughty Scorn as not worth our Notice, is with the Pharisee, to say: *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other Men, such as is this Publican.* In this Age, when Vice and Immorality so much abound, and meet with such barefaced Encouragement, we may see too many, in considering whose Behaviour, we may have just Reason to give God Thanks we are not like them; yet we must not, as the Pharisee did, attribute this to ourselves but to the Grace of God. If we are not Adulterers, Extortioners, and unjust, let us say with the Royal Psalmist, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be all the Glory,* Psal. cxiii.

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Another necessary and essential Part of this Virtue, and the best Proof we can give of it, is, when we refer all our Actions to the Honour and Glory of God, sincerely acknowledging that we have nothing of our own; that whatever we have or enjoy, we have received it all from him, the only Author and Giver of all that is good. Hence St Paul puts this Question in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: *What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received; why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?* 1. Cor. iv. If we will glory, let it be in the Lord, as the same Apostle advises. We shall fall vastly short of our Duty, if we proudly attribute any Thing to ourselves. If we are truly humble, we shall upon all Occasions, and in all Things, desire that God alone may be glorified. This is that Virtue of Humility recommended by our Divine Master, and is the proper Badge, or characteristick Note of his true Disciples and Followers. He says to every one: *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of Heart*: And further assures us, that whoever exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. This is abundantly sufficient to let us see the Necessity of this Virtue, and how very much it imports every one to study Humility, to let it be well grounded in his Heart, and to shew it in all his Actions; for without it, as we may learn from the Pharisee in this Gospel, all our Acts
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of Piety and Devotion will be nothing in the Sight of God, nor of any Service to us.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O my God! have Mercy on me, and by thy Grace preserve me from all Pride and Self-Conceit. Let me never rob thee of the Honour due to thee, nor attribute that to myself, which is the gratuitous Effect of thy Bounty. How little Reason have I to be proud, or to value myself, Wretch that I am, drawn out of the Darkness of Nothing, conceived in Sin and brought forth in Iniquity? Alas! of myself, am unable to produce one good Thought, or to do the least good Work without thee. Shall I then be proud? Shall I indulge myself in Vanity, and prefer myself before others? O my God! let me tremble at the thought of putting so great an Affront upon thee, who alone art the Author of all Good, and to whom alone the Glory of every Thing is most justly due.

I have nothing, O Lord, which I have not received from thee. I am indebted to thy Goodness for every Thing I have; and to thee do I return all again. Whatever Thought of Vanity or Pride the Devil may suggest, I do now, for then, reject, detest and abhor them. May I never consent, or be carried away with them. In all my Actions I will desire nothing, but with a pure Intention to seek thy Honour and Glory only; and upon all Occasions sincerely,

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cerely, and from my heart to say: *Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to thy Name be all the Glory.* O thou, who dost resist the Proud, and givest Grace to the Humble, give me a sincere and true Humility, whereby I may always think humbly of myself, and well of others. What I am in thy Sight, that I am, and no more. May I please thee, and let all the World contemn and despise me. Let me find Acceptance in thy Sight, and I shall have all I want and desire.

Eleventh *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Mark*, vii. 31.

AND going out of the Coasts of *Tyre*, he came by *Sidon*, to the Sea of *Galilee*, through the Midst of the Coasts of *Decapolis*. 32. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his Hand upon him. 33. And taking him from the Multitude apart, he put his Fingers into his Ears, and spitting, he touched his Tongue. 34. And looking up to Heaven, he sighed, and said to him: *Ephpheta*, which is, *Be thou opened*. 35. And immediately his Ears were opened, and the String of his Tongue was loosed, and he spoke plain. 36. And he charged them that they should tell no Man. But the more he charged them, so much the more
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a great Deal did they publish it. 37. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak.

REFLECTIONS.

He hath done all Things well. These Words were spoke by the admiring Multitude, uttered by them in a Transport of Wonder at the surprising Miracle wrought by our Blessed Saviour on the deaf and dumb Man, who was brought to him. The Condition of this poor Man was truly deplorable, and rendered him a just Object of our Saviour's Compassion; and is an admirable Figure of the much more deplorable Condition of wilful habitual Sinners, who are spiritually deaf and dumb, who do not, because they will not, hear those Things which belong to their great and eternal Interest; who though they have Tongues, may be said to be Dumb, because they make a wrong Use of the Faculty of Speech. It is to cure these unhappy Persons, that Christ, by his Ministers, offers his Assistance, to put his Fingers unto their Ears, and to touch their Tongues. As to cure a Person sick of a dangerous Distemper, it is necessary he should be willing to take the Remedies prescribed by an able Physician, and to do this more willingly to be sensible of the Danger he is in.

Let us therefore endeavour, in the first Place, to shew wilful habitual Sinners that they are truly
spiritually

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spiritually deaf and dumb. To let them see the Danger of their State may move, and make them willing to apply the Remedies which, in the second Place, we shall propose.

The Royal Psalmist, speaking of the Idols of the Heathens, says: *They have Ears, but hear not; Mouths, but speak not*, Psal. cxiii. The same may be truly said, in a spiritual Sense of Sinners, who, in Opposition to all the Exhortations they hear, chuse to go on in the Ways of Sin. The sacred Oracle, in several Places pronounces them deaf, and calls them dumb Dogs; and not without Reason, for although they seem to enjoy those Senses very perfectly, yet, by a wrong Use of them, make their Condition worse than if they had them not at all. The Faculty of Hearing is given to us, to be able to hear and understand what is said to us: And it is the same Thing whether we can, or cannot hear, if hearing we pay no Attention or Regard to what we hear, or what is said to us, only that such an affected wilful Deafness is worse than the other. To be corporally deaf, so as not to hear what is said to us, is a very great Misfortune, and what deserves Compassion, yet has nothing in it criminal; but a wilful Deafness, and obstinate refusing to hear, or hearken to what is said, is more than a Misfortune. It is an affected Evil, a voluntary Crime, and justly deserves Punishment: And the Guilt is highly increased, as the Contempt and Affront is greater, when the Person who speaks, is one who may justly command from

us Respect and Attention, and when what he says concerns our good and real Interest. In this Case, to be obstinately deaf is highly provoking, and those who are guilty deserve to smart under the Consequences.

Such are Sinners, those who obstinately continue in their sinful Ways. They have Ears, but will not hear. They are deaf, not by Misfortune, but by Choice. They are often called upon, and often spoken to, and what is said to them concerns their best and greatest Interest, and by those, who speaking to them in the Name of God, deserve Attention, if not on their own Account, yet in Regard that what they say is by the Authority of him who says of his Ministers: *He who hears you, hears me; and he who despises you, despises me.* Nay, God himself often speaks to them, and calls upon them by the Inspiration of this holy Spirit, by the Checks of their own Conscience, and by divers other Ways, to leave the broad and dangerous Road of Sin, assuring them that it leads to Destruction. To continue in this dangerous Road, to persist in this fatal broad Way, what is it but a Proof that we do not hear, that is, will not, but stop our Ears against all Admonition; and that if we unhappily perish, it will be our own Fault, nor can we in this Case lay the Blame on any but ourselves.

What has been said of Sinners being thus spiritually and wilfully deaf, is equally true of the other Faculty of speaking, which they have
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in the same Sense lost. To be dumb is generally esteemed a natural Consequence of being deaf; for not being able to hear what is said, it is not easy to learn to speak. In like Manner, when Sinners have contracted a spiritual Deafness, and will not hear to regard what is told them of their Duty, no Wonder if they become likewise spiritually dumb, as to the right Use of their Speech. To this may be attributed that too general ill Use of the Tongue so common in these Days. Never indeed was more Talking, nor ever less to the main Purpose, and though it may seem a Paradox, to assert those to be dumb, whose Tongues seldom or ever lie still; yet in that spiritual Sense wherein it is here considered, it is true that Sinners are not only deaf, but dumb likewise.

This Faculty of Speech is one of the great and peculiar Privileges of Man, and this Faculty is given to us by God, that thereby we may glorify him, and employ it in promoting his Honour, and for our own and Neighbour's Good: as far as we deviate from this, and use our Tongues for contrary Ends and Purposes, so far we may be said to be spiritually dumb. A Misfortune much greater than not to be able to speak at all, which, though it renders a Man incapable of Society, and reduces him to the melancholy State of living by himself, does not strip him of his Innocence, neither wounds his Conscience, nor offends God. And it is much more to be wished, never to speak, than as is the too common Practice of Sinners.

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A little Observation will be enough to let us see the many and horrible Abuses of the Tongue, by cursing, swearing, Calumny, lying, and Detraction, vain and immodest Conversation; and will make appear that all those who employ their Tongues in such Discourses are in a much worse Condition than the dumb Man in the Gospel. Another Proof of spiritual Dumbness is the too frequent Omission of Prayer, Devotion and the Duties of Religion. In this Respect many are dumb; for though they know how, and do speak very much, and with great Eloquence in Relation to the Things of this World, yet in Regard of God and his Service, know not how, that is, will not open their Mouths; and while they often run on with a Volubility of Speech, in detracting and speaking ill of their Neighbours, will not say one single Word in his Defence, or to speak well of him. In these and many other Cases, Sinners shew themselves to be deaf and dumb; and being in this unhappy Condition, it will be a great Work of Charity to endeavour to cure them, greater than to cure a Man who cannot hear or speak. In Order to this, let us propose some efficacious Remedies; a proper Use of which will produce a happy Effect, and restore them to spiritual Hearing, and to speak plain.

That the Remedies may be truly efficacious and work a Cure, there is a proper Disposition required in those to whom they are prescribed; which is, that being sensible of their Danger, they
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be willing to do what may be required of them. The most skilful Physician may give his Attendance, and prescribe the best of Medicines, and all in vain, if the sick Man will not believe he is sick, will not take those Medicines, or not in the Manner he is ordered. In such a Case, the Art and Skill of the whole Faculty would be useless. It is just the same in our spiritual Disorders. Sinners spiritually deaf and dumb, must be sensible of their sad State. Of this they are often told, and put in Mind of the Danger they are in of being irrecoverably and for ever lost. This may be abundantly sufficient to move them to seek a Cure, and to be willing to follow Advice, and to make Use of proper Means to obtain a Cure.

In order to this, they must have Recourse to Jesus, and by sincere Sorrow and Contrition seek to obtain the Pardon of their Sins. This Sorrow must be accompanied with firm and sincere Resolutions of Amendment, and a careful avoiding of Sin, and the Occasions of Sin for the future. Thus disposed let them apply to the Ministers of God in the holy Sacrament of Penance, or Confession. It is there Jesus Christ will put his Finger into their Ears, will touch their Tongues, and speak those powerful Words: *Ephpheta. Be thou opened.* And their Ears will be opened, their Tongues loosed, and they will speak plain. This is the Remedy Sinners must use, and when used right will prove efficacious in a perfect Cure. And tho' any one may have long, for many Years, unhappily

unhappily laboured under the Deafness and Dumbness we speak of; yet he must not despond, the Power of Jesus our heavenly Physician, is no Ways limited; he both can, and will heal the most inveterate Disorders, however confirmed and rooted in by a long Habit of evil Customs. What Encouragement this to Sinners, to have recourse to him, and in the Manner here mentioned! He rejects none: He invites all to come to him, and all may from him receive the Cure they stand in Need of, which, when they have received, they must take Care of relapsing, and be faithful to the good Purposes they made. Relapses are very dangerous in temporal Sicknes, and are much more so in spiritual ones. A Man cured of Deafness and Dumbness, who wilfully does that which again deprives him of hearing and speaking, may truly be said not to have deserved the Benefit he received: And if a Sinner thus cured, by wilful Relapses into Sin becomes spiritually deaf again and dumb, he shews a monstrous Ingratitude to God by abusing his Mercy, and justly deserves to smart under the Rigour of his Justice.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

How deplorable, my God! is the Condition of those, who are thus deaf? Whose Ears are stopped, who do not, will not hear thy sweet and charming Voice? How miserable are they who are dumb and do not praise and magnify thee? O Saviour of the World! thou didst

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cure the deaf and dumb Man who was brought to thee. Shew thy Goodness to all who labour under this Infirmary. Open their Ears that they may understand. May the Strings of their Tongues be loosed, that they may glorify thee. And while I intreat thy Mercy in Behalf of others, do not forget me, dear Lord, thy poor Servant. Alas, my God ! I have been too often deaf to thy gracious Calls ; and have stopped my Ears from hearkening to thee. O may thy powerful Grace restore my Hearing, that I may hear and understand thy holy Will.

Woe be to me, because I have held my Peace. I have not spoke as I ought. I have been silent and tongue-tied in Regard of thee, O thou bountiful Author of all Things. How ungrateful have I been to thee ! how forgetful of thee ! O loose my Tongue, that it may break forth into thy Praises, that I may sing aloud the Mercies of my God. I glorify and praise thee, O my most sweet and merciful Redeemer, for thy Goodness to me, and to all Mankind. Thou dost all Things well. Thou makest the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak. Glory be to thee, and may all the World adore and glorify thy holy Name. *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name, Psal. ci.*

Twelfth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The *GOSPEL*, St. *Luke* x. 23.

AND turning to his Disciples, he said :
Blessed are the Eyes that see the Things
which you see. 24. For I say unto you, that
many Prophets and Kings have desired to see
the Things that you see, and have not seen
them ; and to hear the Things you hear, and
have not heard them. 25. And behold a cer-
tain Lawyer stood up, tempting him, and say-
ing : Master, what must I do to possess eternal
Life ? 26. But he said to him : What is
written in the Law ? How readest thou ?
27. He answering, said : Thou shalt love the
Lord thy God with thy whole Heart, and
with thy whole Soul, and with all thy Strength,
and with all thy Mind ; And thy Neighbour

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as thyself. 28. And he said to him : Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live 29. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus : And who is my Neighbour ? 30. And Jesus answering, said : A certain Man went down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, and fell among Robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead. 31. And it chanced that a certain Priest went down the same Way ; and seeing him, passed by. 32. In like Manner also, a *Levite*, when he was near the Place and saw him, passed by. 33. But a certain *Samaritan* being on his Journey, came near him ; and seeing him, was moved with Compassion. 34. And going up to him, bound up his Wounds, pouring in Oil and Wine : And setting him upon his own Beast, brought him to an Inn, and took Care of him. 35. And the next Day he took out two Pence, and gave it to the Host, and said : Take Care of him ; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my Return will repay thee. 36. Which of these three in thy Opinion was Neighbour to him, that fell among the Robbers ? 37. But he said : He that shewed Mercy to him. And Jesus said to him : Go, and do thou in like Manner.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

It was an excellent Question which the Lawyer put to Jesus Christ, and it were to be wished, that every Christian would often, and seriously put the same to himself. *What must I do to possess*

possess eternal Life? said this Doctor of the Jewish Law to the holy Jesus, who asking him in Return, what was written in the Law, and what he had learned from it? He replied, that the Law had bid him love God with his whole Heart, and his Neighbour as himself. Our Blessed Lord told him that he had answered very right, and bid him do that, and he should live. From hence we may learn the indispensable Obligation we lie under to God and our Neighbour. The Sum of our Duty, and the whole Gospel in Epitome. Christ himself assuring us, that on these two Commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets, St. *Matt.* xxii. Hence, unless we do truly love God, and our Neighbour, in vain we think to gain eternal Life. To love God is the first and greatest Command; and how we are to love him; and in what Manner we are to love our Neighbour, the second great Command, we may learn from the Gospel of this Day.

The beloved Disciple St. *John*, 1 *Ep.* iii. bids us love not in Word, nor in Tongue, but Deed and in Truth. It is not to say, we love God, we must give Proof of it, by loving him, in the first Place, with all our Hearts, that is, to love him above all Things: to love him more than any other Object whatever, and consequently to this, never to think of dividing our Hearts between God and the World. When we are told we must love God with all our Heart, it is plain, he requires our whole Heart, and we must give it him whole, or we give it

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him not at all. God alone is to be loved above all other Things, and all other Things are to be loved only in him, and for him. This Notion of loving God with all our Heart, will let us see how absolutely incompatible it is with wilful Sin; for as all Sin is an Offence against him, we cannot say we love God, when we wilfully transgress his Law, and offend him: Much less can we say, we love him with all our Heart. Indeed, Obedience to his holy Law, is the best Proof of our Love, which, while it makes us very cautious how we displease him, truly shews that we love him. Of this we may judge by the Behaviour of others to ourselves. We are not easily persuaded that a Person does truly and sincerely love us, who shews himself indifferent as to pleasing us, and who frequently and wilfully does that which he knows will disoblige us. Such a Person may say, he loves us, but we shall have great Difficulty to believe him, and with Reason. True Love desires nothing more than to please the Party beloved, to oblige him in all Things, and never willingly do what may offend him. To love God as we ought, and with our whole Heart, is to obey him, to observe his Law, and never, wilfully, and with Deliberation, offend him. This is the first, and principal Part of this Duty, and the greatest Proof we can give of it.

Another, and necessary Part of this Love of God, and Proof of it is to endeavour to do those Things which are agreeable and pleasing
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to him. To love to converse with and entertain ourselves with him. It is a Sign of no great Love or Affection to any one, when we shun his Company, care not for his Presence, or to be with him. How can those Christians then persuade themselves, and tell others they love God, to whom Prayer is irksome and tedious, and the Duties of Religion are counted burthensome? Such are only Pretenders to this Virtue, and as little deserve God should love them, as they are backward to shew any true love for him. That there are too many such is evident by the Neglect of Prayer, and attending on the Service of God, so common in these Days of Lukewarmness and Tepidity. If to love God with all our Heart, seems thus necessarily to include a Desire and Delight to be with him, it also, when true and real, produces a firm Hope and Confidence in him; and to be entirely resigned to his holy Will in all the Dispensations of Providence in the various Occurrences of Life. When we are so happy as to shew these Proofs of the Love of God, then it may be pronounced true and genuine, and we may say with Truth that we love God with all our Hearts. It is a Sign that our Love is but weak, very imperfect when we fret and are very impatient, murmur and repine at every little cross Accident we meet with. Do we not know that whatever happens to us in this World, happens by the Permission of God, and is designed by him for our greater Good? If we truly loved him we should not be

uneasy or discontented at any of the Dispensations of his all wise and most loving Providence : But as the Frailty of our corrupt Nature is such, and our perverse Inclinations so powerfully bent to Objects of Sense, and the Things of this World, that we are in imminent Danger of having our Hearts corrupted by Love of the World and its Follies : In order to prevent which, he is oftentimes pleased to im-bitter the World to us by Crosses and Afflictions, that we may be the more readily induced to draw off our Hearts from the World, and fix them upon him only, who alone has a Right to them, who alone deserves them. Finally, if we love God as we ought, and with all our Hearts, we shall long for, and earnestly desire to enjoy him ; the World and all its Pleasures will be distasteful to us. We shall incessantly sigh after Heaven, as where only we shall be perfectly happy in the Enjoyment of God. This will make that, which to worldly minded Men, is so dreadful, Death I mean, easy and desireable, which to those who truly love and serve God will be no other than a quick Passage, from a Place of Banishment, to the Enjoyment of what they earnestly wish for, and desire.

To this Love of God must be joined the Love of our Neighbour, which Jesus Christ tells us in the second great Commandment, and is so inviolably annexed to the Law of God, that whatever we may say, of our loving God, unless we do also really and sincerely love our Neigh-

Neighbour, it is all Hypocrisy and meer Pretence. Hence St. *John* puts this Question : *He that loveth not his Brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not ?* 1 John iv. To love our Neighbour is a good Proof that the Love of God dwells in us. Now as to the Manner, or how we are to love our Neighbour, our Blessed Lord expresses it when he says, *we must love him as ourselves.* How we love ourselves is pretty evident. We love ourselves, not only sincerely, perhaps too much ; at least we wish all Manner of Good to ourselves, and endeavour what we can to promote it. We desire to be free from all Evil, and do what we can to avoid it. We would have others pity us in our Troubles, and to assist and relieve us in our Wants and Necessities, at least, to abstain from doing us any Wrong or Injury, and from hurting us in our Reputation or Fortunes. This love of ourselves must be the Rule we observe in loving our Neighbour. We must love him sincerely, wish him all Manner of Good, and endeavour to procure it to him, as Occasions may offer, and it may be in our Power. We must not do him any Mischief, nor any Ways hurt him in his Person, good Name, or Property, and readily help and assist him whenever he may stand in need of us. It is not enough barely to wish him well, or to pity him in his Wants, our Love of him must extend itself further, by relieving him in his Wants and Necessities, according to our Ability. We must never envy,

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scorn, nor despise him ; much less bear Malice or Hatred to him. As we desire our Neighbours would forgive us an Affront, or Injury, we may have done them, we must readily and freely forgive them the Injuries that they may at any Time do to us. It is thus we are to love our Neighbour, and by these Proofs shew that we truly love him as ourselves. An instructive Example of which we have in the Gospel of this *Sunday*, in the Behaviour of the good *Samaritan*. Let every one apply it to himself, *and do in like Manner.*

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O inexhaustible Fountain of divine Love ! fill my Heart with a true and sincere Love of thee. Give me that Love which distastes all Things but thee, and which may make me pleasing to thee in all Things. Ah, my God ! I seek thee, and desire thee only. I seek thee for thyself alone, and love thee because thou art infinitely good in thyself, and infinitely worthy to be loved. O may I love thee with an active fervent Love, which may make me daily endeavour in all Things to please thee.

There is nothing, dearest Lord, which I am not ready to do for Love of thee. For thy Love I bid Defiance, and renounce to all the alluring Pleasures of a vain World. I condemn all the Delights of the Flesh, and to every Thing that may be in the least contrary to thee.

O

O my God! O Love, from whom all Love proceeds, I desire to love thee above all Things. Ah, dearest Lord! can it be a Question, whether I should love thee? Can I doubt or hesitate, though but for one Moment, whether all my Felicity and Happiness does not consist in loving thee? No, Lord, I can never be happy but in loving thee with all my Heart, and I shall be for ever miserable if I do not love thee.

Thou hast commanded me, O God, to love my Neighbour as myself. I will do so, and give thee Thanks for this sweet Commandment of Love. In my Neighbour I behold thy Image and likeness, to which we all are made. In him I see, my God, thy Bounty and Goodness to thy Creatures; and shall I not love him for the Relation he bears to thee, and for thy Perfections which appear in him. Give me Grace to love him as myself, for it is thy Will I should do so. I desire, O my God, to love all Mankind. May we all sincerely love one another, and may all our Loves center in thee.

Thirteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Luke* xvii. 11.

AND it came to pass, as he was going to *Jerusalem*, he passed through the Midst of *Samaria* and *Galilee*. 12. And as he entered into a certain Town, there met him ten Men who were Lepers, who stood afar off. 13. And lifting up their Voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have Mercy on us. 15. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, shew yourselves to the Priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean. 15. And one of them when he saw he was made clean, went back with a loud Voice glorifying God. 16. And he fell on his Face before his Feet, giving Thanks: And this was a *Samaritan*. 17. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? 18. There is no one found to return, and give Glory to God, but this Stranger. 19. And he said to him: Arise, go thy Way; for thy Faith hath made thee Whole.

R E-

R E F L E C T I O N S.

To be grateful for Favours received, is no less consonant to Reason, than it is to Religion. Ingratitude is a Vice universally condemned, though too frequently practised. In the Time of Necessity, and when we stand in Need of Assistance, we are never wanting to solicit the Help of those who can relieve us. But a little Reflection on the too general Conduct of Mankind will make appear that few are as ready and willing to make a grateful Return, or to acknowledge Benefits received. It would be well, in some Respects, if this Ingratitude was only to be observed with Relation to one another, and that we did not give too much Reason to be taxed with this criminal Ingratitude to God. The Conduct of the nine Lepers in the Gospel has but too near a resemblance with that of many Christians, who seem to be extremely deficient in a Duty which ought to be inseparable from their Character, I mean a grateful Sense of the Benefits they receive from God, and a right Use of the Mercies and Favours he bestows upon them. In order to correct this great and practical Error, let us consider in what Manner we ought to be grateful to God, and the Use we are to make of his Favours: As also the horrible Vice of Ingratitude, in the ill Use of his Mercies.

As the Favours and Mercies we receive are very many and truly great, nothing can be more just and reasonable than to be grateful

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and thankful for the same. In order to this, let us consider a little, and seriously, what God has done for us, not only in general but in particular. There are general Favours which he has conferred upon us, in common: And there are particular Mercies, which may be said to regard ourselves. There are none in any State or Condition of Life, but, upon Reflection, will find that he has been often on particular Occasions and Circumstances obliged to the divine Bounty. The general Favours we have received may be considered as corporal and spiritual. Under the Head of corporal Blessings are comprised, our Creation, the noble and excellent Being we enjoy, our Preservation, our Health and Strength, the good Things of this World, Food and Rayment, and a comfortable Subsistence. Our Redemption, Vocation, Sanctification, the Knowledge of our Duty, Prayer, the Holy Sacraments of the Church, and hearing the divine Word, are spiritual Mercies: All which, in a very clear and conspicuous Manner, demonstrate how bountiful and good God is to us, and how much we are obliged to be grateful to him. This Obligation will be set in a further and stronger Light, if to these general Favours, which we receive in common with other Christians, we add the particular Mercies and Blessings conferred upon us on some certain Occasions and in some particular Cases. So many and so various are the Incidents of human Life, in all Ranks and Stations, that there is no one, who
if

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if he seriously considers, but may discover several particular Instances of a special Providence over him ; and who may easily recollect how, in what Manner, at such or such a Time, he experienced the particular Goodness of God in his Regard. To mention these particular Favours is not to be expected. Some Hints may be given, and may serve as a Help to bring them to our Remembrance. Have we never been dangerously ill, and apprehensive of the Consequences ? have we not cried out with the Lepers : *Jesus, Master, have Mercy on us ?* If he has heard our Prayers and restored us to Health, is it not a particular Mercy to ourselves ? Have we never been in imminent Danger, and been delivered by Means and in a Manner that spoke our Deliverance surprising and wonderful ? Have we not been sometimes in more than ordinary Trouble, and the kind Hand of God has intervened and made us easy ? Many there are, who some Time or other, have been reduced to great Streights and Difficulties, and cast down by the Prospect of an impending Misfortune. Friends have been applied to without Success. All the Methods have been used that human Wit and Prudence could suggest, but in vain : Their only Hope has been in God, who has shewed himself their best Friend, by a Deliverance as remarkable as their Danger, and when they least thought of, or expected the Assistance they wanted. These are some particular Instances of many
which

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which every one's Reflection on his own particular Circumstances may inform him of.

It is certain, these Blessings I have mentioned, justly require from us a suitable and grateful Acknowledgement. To deny it would be a flagrant Proof that we are as unworthy, as we are insensible of the Benefits we have received. We must, therefore, like the *Samaritan* Leper, with a loud Voice, praise and glorify God for them. We must acknowledge that it is from him we receive them, and return sincere Thanks for them. But here we must take Care not to deceive ourselves, or think a few verbal Speeches is sufficient by reciting such Acts of Thanksgiving as we find in our Prayer-Books. Such Acts of Devotion are very proper, and are frequently to be made, and when done with a due Sense of our Obligations, are highly pleasing to God, as they speak a Mind sensible of its Duty, and desirous to perform it. But this Gratitude we then seem to express, will be best shewn, when to those Acts of Thanksgiving we join a due Care to make a right Use of the Favours we receive. To be duly thankful for our Creation and Preservation, is to endeavour to answer the End for which God made us, to love and serve him here, that we may be happy with him hereafter. Our Health, Strength, our Learning, Abilities; our Riches and Wealth are to be employed in promoting his Honour and Glory and not to be abused or squandered away in Sin
and

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and Folly; for this would be a most criminal Ingratitude, and what he will severely punish.

The holy Law-giver *Moses*, enumerating to the *Jews* the many wonderful Blessings God had bestowed upon them, thus pathetically expresses himself with a pious Indignation at their stubborn Ingratitude. *Is it thus, O foolish People, and unwise, that you requite the Lord?* Deut. xxxii. Is this the Return you make for his Mercies? Would to God there was not equal Reason to make the same Reproach to too many Christians, whose ungrateful Conduct and Abuse of God's Blessings shew them equally culpable with the *Jews*. What can be said of those whose flagrant Crimes and notorious Vices shew they have no Sense of the End for which they were made? How many abuse their Learning and Parts to ridicule and cry down Religion and Virtue? How many do we see who consume their Wealth in Prodigality and sinful Vanity? How many consuming and wasting their Health in Excess and criminal Pleasures? It is too true that many when they are dangerously sick, call upon God, beg to be restored to Health, and make many good Purposes, but when he hears their Prayers, and they recover, all their good Purposes are no more thought of, and like the Dog they return to their Vomit, and with the ungrateful Lepers think no more of the Benefit they have received. This Ingratitude must be extremely displeasing to Almighty God, and our own Reason may help us to form a right Notion of this foul Crime.

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Crime. How justly do we think ourselves provoked, when having conferred many Favours upon another, purely out of good Will to him, all the Return we meet with from him is to be affronted and contemned by him? How unworthy do we esteem such a one of any further Regard; and that he ought to feel all the Weight of our Repentment? We ought to think the same of our Ingratitude to God, and have little Reason to expect a Continuance of his Bounty, but much to fear from his Indignation for our ungrateful and unworthy Abuse of his Favours. This deserves our serious Attention, that we may be truly grateful and glorify him for all his Mercies in a right Use of them, that he may graciously continue his goodness to us here, and make us happy in Heaven hereafter.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O my God, infinitely good, and infinitely bountiful! how many are the Benefits thou hast bestowed upon me! How many are the Favours I have received from thee! What shall I render to thee, O thou bounteous Author of all Good? What Returns can I make for all thy Mercies? Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name. It is just and meet, that I should praise and glorify thy Name, O Lord, for ever and ever. O that I could do this as I ought, and in some Measure suitable to the Greatness of that Love thou hast shewn to me!

But,

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But, alas! my God, how ungrateful have I been, and how forgetful of my Duty to thee? I am ashamed, I am covered with Confusion when I consider my base Ingratitude. Pardon me, dear Lord, and may I now at least, be sensible of my Duty, and with a loud Voice and from a sincere Heart, praise and glorify thee. O let my Soul be touched with a due Sense of thy Bounty, of thy Love, and of my Obligations to thee. *I will sing the Mercies of the Lord for ever.* Psal. lxxxviii. May every Moment of my Life be spent in this holy Exercise. May my Soul daily breathe forth affectionate Desires of Love and Gratitude. May my Tongue be continually employed in declaring thy Goodness, and my Mind in meditating on thy Mercies; and all my Endeavours tend to excite the whole World and all Creatures to adore and magnify thee

And when I have done this, O my God, what is it in Comparison of what is due to thee? O that I could praise thee in some Degree equal to thy Love and Bounty. That I could praise and adore thee with that most ardent Love wherewith the Cherubim and Seraphim continually praise thee. Ah! who will join my Heart and Voice with all the Choirs of Angels, that from my breast might resound, in Conjunction with them, one and the same Song of Praise and Jubilation, for ever and ever, Amen, so be it.

Fourteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* vi. 24.

NO Man can serve two Masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or, he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. 25. Therefore, I say to you, be not solicitous for your Life, what you shall eat, nor for your Body what you shall put on. Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body more than Rayment? 26. For behold the Birds of the Air, for they neither sow, nor do reap, nor gather into Barns: And your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more Value than they? 27. And which of you by taking Thought, can add to his Stature one Cubit? 28. And for Rayment why are

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are you solicitous? Consider the Lillies of the Field how they grow: They labour not, neither do they spin. 29. But I say to you, that not even *Salomon* in all his Glory was arrayed as one of these. 30. And if the Grass in the Field, which is To-day, and To-morrow is cast into the Oven, God doth so clothe: How much more you, O ye of little Faith? 31. Be not solicitous therefore, saying. What shall we eat; or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? 32. For after all these Things do the Heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have Need of all these Things. 33. Seek ye, therefore, first the Kingdom of God, and his Justice, and all these Things shall be added unto you.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

Among many useful and necessary Instructions, which the Saviour of the World gives to his Disciples, in this Day's holy Gospel, one particularly seems to require our most serious Attention, as, in a Manner, including all the rest, and being a Point of the greatest Importance, is so much more necessary to be pressed Home, as many seem to have very wrong Notions of it: For though our Blessed Lord, Truth itself, assures us, that no one can serve two Masters; that we cannot serve God and Mammon; yet there are those, who are pleased to think otherwise, and to find no Difficulty, in what he says is impossible, and
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pretend to reconcile the Service of this World with the Service of God. These People will find, one Day, the Errour and Mistake to be on their Side; and what Christ says, will remain, as it is, an eternal Truth. The two Masters our Saviour mentions, are God and the World, both which it is impossible to serve. And we are further to consider, that as God has created us to love and serve him, he is jealous in this Regard and will not allow us to serve any but him. He will not suffer the World and Creatures to be put in Competition, or upon the Level with him; or that we give Part of that Homage to any other, which is due to him alone. It is in vain that corrupt Nature makes Use of a thousand Artifices to reconcile the Love of God with the Love of the World. Such an Attempt is equally criminal, as to succeed in it is impossible. The Moment we go about to join God and the World, that Moment he abandons us; for he, who is our legitimate Lord and Master, will not permit any one to usurp his Dominion over us, or to aim at an equal Share therein with them. *No one can serve two Masters.*

This being so, and as we must be Servants of one, or the other; can we hesitate a single Moment about the Choice? Ought we not immediately to chuse a Service, which indeed is perfect freedom, a most glorious Liberty, and not one that is truly ignominious and miserable. In order to help us in the Election we are to make, let us seriously ponder with ourselves
and

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and examine into the Service both of one and the other Master. God and the World. The Nature of one will shew how incompatible it is with the other; the Excellence and Easiness of the Service of God, will appear much more eligible than the Difficulties and Wretchedness of serving the World.

To represent the Service of God, and that of the World, how inconsistent one is with the other, to do it plainly and sincerely is best. Not to heighten or raise the Character of one by Oratory and Panegyrick, nor to depress the other by Satyr and Declamation. The Service of God wants no Fucus to set it off, and appears most charming in its native Beauty. That of the World lies under so many Disadvantages as to name them will be sufficient to make a reasonable Man and a Christian to dislike it. To serve God, is to live up to the Dignity of, and as becomes a rational Creature; and to answer the End for which we are made, thereby to be happy here and hereafter. To prove this, we need only to consider what are the Commands God lays upon us, in the Service he requires from us. This is admirably and clearly expressed in these Words of the Prophet *Micheas*. *I will shew thee, O Man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee; Verily to do Judgment, and to love Mercy, and to walk carefully with thy God*, Mich. vi. Here is an Abridgement of the whole Duty of a Christian; an Epitome of whatever is required of us in the Service of God. Here are com-
prised

prised all the Duties we are obliged to observe with Regard to God, our Neighbour and ourselves. We are bid to walk carefully with God, that is, to love, honour, serve and obey him. Can any Thing be more just and reasonable than this? That the Creature should honour and obey his great Creator, ; that he should love him from whom he derives his Being. As Man is created a sociable Being ; and as Men have a necessary Connection with and mutual Dependence on one another, what can be more conducing to this very End of our being thus made sociable Creatures, than to love and shew Mercy one to another ? How conformable is it to Reason, abstracted from Religion, that we should live soberly, chastely and regularly , that we should govern and keep under our Passions, and not to be Slaves to them. These are Virtues, even so amiable in themselves, as but to name them is sufficient to recommend them ; nor can there be any Satisfaction in a Debauch and Intemperance equal to that of Sobriety and Moderation. There can be no Comparison between Humility, Meekness and Affability on one Side, and Pride, Arrogance and Haughtiness on the other. Patience and Content are infinitely more charming than Anger, Passion, Murmuring, Strife and Contention. Upon the Whole the Service of God, in the Practice of these Virtues, will appear so just and reasonable, as our Judgment must be extremely corrupted, and our Will sadly vitiated if we can prefer the Service

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vice of the World before it, especially if to this we add the Consequences of one and the other. One will be recompensed with eternal never-ending Happiness; and the other will lead us to everlasting Misery.

That the Service of the World is truly a hard Service will appear evident when we consider that to serve it, we must fall in with all its Measures, and adopt all its Maxims: And though the Recompence it promises seems, at least, in the Eyes of Worldlings, to be great and desirable; yet Experience and the Event will shew that it affords very great Trouble for the present, and Misery in Reversion. What it does bestow upon its most ardent Votaries, no Ways counterballances the Pains and Hardships which must be undergone to obtain it. The Servants of the World may be considered, first, as serving it for the Sake of gaining Riches; but how much Toil and Labour are many forced to undergo before they can obtain what they seek? How many unjust Ways and Means does the World prescribe and which are followed by those who are perpetually thirsting after Wealth? If obtained, what anxious Care and Sollicitudes to preserve, or to increase what is gotten? If Honour is our darling Passion, and the World is served in order to grow great, and to gratify Ambition, what a Series of troublesome Submissions, Fawnings and Flatterings must we pass through before we can rise to what we aim at? And then, at best, is but a glittering
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gilded Slavery, subject to a thousand Punctilios and nice Ceremonies, which deprive a Man of that Freedom wherein great Part of the Happiness of Life consists. Envy the constant Companion of Honour, and a high Station exposes him to a thousand Artifices of Rivals, who hope to advance themselves by his Fall. The Gallant and Lover of Pleasure, the Debauchee and Libertine spend their Time, ruin their Health, and often shorten their Lives in a miserable Drudgery, Slaves as they are to brutal Passions. This may be justly stiled a dirty Service, and to all such the World is a hard Master, who with a high Hand commands all our Time, and all our Labour, will not allow us to think of God and our Souls, as if they were not worth our Care, or least we should be apt to break our Chains, and quit our Servitude. The World reads us daily Lessons of Pride and Arrogance to our Neighbours, and bids us stick at Nothing to compass our Ends. Hatred, Malice and Revenge; Discord, Strife and Contention are the Fires it daily kindles, and daily furnishes Fuel to maintain those Fires. Interest is made the great Concern, the one Thing necessary, and to which every Thing else must be sacrificed. Is there any Thing, Christians, desireable in such a Service as this? Can we, like foolish Slaves, who are fond of their Chains, prefer the Service of the World to that of God, so pleasant, so easy, and so glorious in its Consequences! Think, and think seriously on what Christ says: *You cannot*

not serve God and Mammon. One of these two Masters we must serve. Happy those who make a wise Choice, and addict themselves seriously to the Service of God, the best of Masters, and who for our loving him in this World, will make us for ever happy with him in the next; and the faithful Servant of God will, one Day, find Heaven to be a Recompence truly worth all the Pains he took to obtain it.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

Adieu, vain World, adieu. I have nothing to say to you. I contemn and despise your Service, or rather Slavery. O God of my Heart, God of my Soul, and of all that I am! Thou only hast a Right to my Service; and thou hast told me that I cannot serve thee, and the World; shall I hesitate or ballance in my Choice, or vainly think to divide my Heart between thee and the World? No, my God! I will serve thee only, and dedicate my whole Self entirely to thy Love and Service. I desire, O Lord, to be so entirely thine, as not to wish, will or desire any Thing but as thou wilt.

I renounce to the World and all that is in it. Thou hast made me, dear Lord for higher and nobler Things. Thou hast made me for thyself, and the glorious Enjoyment of thee in thy Kingdom of Heaven. What is there in the World comparable to this? O thou best

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of Masters, my God and my All! Thou hast called me to thy holy Service. To serve thee is perfect Freedom. To serve thee, is more than to reign. May I never prove false and undutiful to thee. Assist me with thy Grace, that I may constantly persevere in thy Service to the last Moment of my Life. This is the sincere Resolution of my Heart, and the determinate Choice of my free Will. Nothing shall ever make me alter it, or cause me to draw the least Part of my Heart and Affections from God, nor make me ever to quit his holy Service. Confirm me, O my God, in this my good Purpose. May I begin from this Moment to love and serve thee as I ought, for hitherto, alas! I have done nothing.

Fifteenth

Fifteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St *Luke* vii. 11.

AND it came to pass afterwards that he went into a City that is called *Naim*; and there went with him his Disciples and a great Multitude. 12. And when he came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold a dead Man was carried out, the only Son of his Mother; and she was a Widow: And a great Multitude of the City was with her. 13. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with Compassion for her, he said to her: Weep not. 14. And he came near and touched the Bier. And they that carried it stood still; and he said: Young Man, I say to thee, arise. 15. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his Mother. 16. And there

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came a Fear on them all : and they glorified God, saying : A great Prophet is risen up among us ; and God hath visited his People.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

This Gospel presents us with a mournful, but an equally instructive Spectacle : A just Subject of Pity and Compassion, at the Sight of which it may be difficult to refrain from Tears, or not, at least, to feel our Minds affected with the tenderest Sentiments of sympathising Grief and Sorrow, in beholding the silent solemn Pomp of a Funeral. But this is not the End for which our holy Mother the Church reads to her Children this Portion of Scripture for the Gospel of this *Sunday*. Her Views are more extensive ; and aim at giving us most excellent and useful Lessons of practical Morality ; such as may have a proper Influence on our Conduct. Let us enter into her Views. Let us adopt her Sentiments, and from the mournful lugubrious Subject before us, learn those serious and important Truths, wherein we are all deeply concerned.

The holy Evangelist informs us that our Blessed Saviour going into a City called *Naim*, he beheld the Corpse of a young Man carrying forth to be buried. He was a young Man, the only Son of his Mother, who was a Widow. A great Multitude of Mourners and sorrowful Attendants accompanied her to pay their decent last Dues to the Deceased. This mournful
Sight

Sight moved the holy Jesus to Pity and Compassion. Addressing himself to the afflicted Parent, he said to her: Weep not. And having thus bid her to suspend her Tears, soon changed her Tears of Sorrow into those of Joy and Gladness, and instantly restored her Son to Life. Such a Miracle of Power and Goodness, and of which the Multitude then present were ocular Witnesses, struck every one with Admiration. They might well cry out in the Transports of their Admiration, a great Prophet is risen among us, and God hath visited his People. This is the Subject of the Gospel for this *Sunday*, and wherein are contained many instructive and practical Truths. One serious and very important presents itself, at first Sight, to our Consideration, and brings with it, its clear and undeniable Proof. Namely, the Certainty of dying, and the Uncertainty of the Time when. A dead Man was carried out of the City to be buried. Christians, let me desire you to look upon this dead Corpse, and in the Midst of this solemn Funeral, behold a lifeless, senseless Lump of Clay going to be laid in the cold Grave, there to moulder into the Dust from whence it was first taken. Behold and be convinced from hence that you also must die, and how soon you know not. This dead Person was a young Man, the darling, growing Hope of his tender, widowed Parent; but, alas! cut off in the Flower of his Age. His Youth, her Hopes, in his rising, promising Expectation all fled; all lost and extinct. Ah,

Christians ! how uncertain is Life ! How little known to us the Time of our dying ! From hence follows another useful and instructive Lesson, the due Care and Preparation we ought to make for Death. On these important Truths let us expatiate a little and make them the Subject of our present and serious Consideration.

That it is appointed for all Men once to die, is a certain and infallible Truth, not only asserted in the sacred Oracles, shewn by the Example of this young Man in the Gospel, but of which we have ocular Demonstration every Day. This the constant Bills of Mortality prove : This the silent Graves and Church-yards, over which we often pass, evidence : The Tombs and Monuments of Ancestors, all speak the same Thing, and proclaim this Truth : *It is appointed for all Men once to die*, Heb. ix. None can deny this. Though Infidels, Libertines and Hereticks deny, ridicule and make a Jest of other Articles of Faith ; yet here they agree with, and subscribe to this great and serious Truth, *we must die*. That is, our Souls must, one Day be separated from our Bodies. We shall be no more, as to this World, we must part from all we now see and enjoy. Our Bodies will be laid in the Grave, there to be devoured by Worms, while our Souls are carried to an endless happy or miserable Eternity. This will be the Lot of all Mankind. This is the irrevocable Decree passed upon all the Sons of *Adam*. We may, for some Years, make a Figure in this World,

World, and appear like Stars of the first Magnitude, dazzling the Eyes of those who behold us by the Splendour and Magnificence of our Equipage and Retinue; but, alas! like false Fires or Meteors, we shall soon dwindle away into Nothing, and struck by the Hand of Death fall into Dust: For Dust we are, and to Dust we must return again; *Gen. iii.* We may here swim in Pleasure and Delights; be rich and great; but Death will come and take us away from all that is pleasing and delightful in this World. He will also put an End to the Misery of the Poor and Afflicted, whose Lives are burdensome to them. He will free them from all the Trouble and Affliction they labour under, and lay them in the silent quiet Grave, equally with the most prosperous and happy. Death knows no Difference between High and Low, Rich and Poor, Happy or Miserable. The Monarch and the Slave are equal to him. He seizes all alike. To die is an universal Law to which all are subject without Exception. Old and Young both Sexes, every one must own this Truth. *It is appointed for all Men once to die.*

But though we must die, we know not when. Perhaps within a few Years, one Year, a Month, a Week, To-morrow, this Day, or Hour, we are continually exposed, and know not when Death will seize us. It is evident and sure, that we must die; nor is it less evident, that the Hour of our Death is uncertain. Experience, daily Experience proves

both. How many, and daily Instances of sudden Death, of unforeseen Accidents do we hear of which deprive Men of their Lives ? One, passing a River, is drowned ; another falls and breaks his Neck. This Man is murdered. That well in Health, to all Appearance, suddenly drops down and dies. Thus while there is but one Way to come into the World, there are Numbers to send us out of it. A Fever kills one ; an Appoplexy another ; a Consumption a third. Many have found the smallest and most inconsiderable Accidents to have been the Cause of their Death. A little Scratch, a small Hurt, or slight Wound at first neglected, increases and proves mortal. Even long Distempers, and which afford some Time to prepare for Death, may be called sudden, since all Distempers have a Beginning, and generally seize us when we think not of them. Many have gone well to Bed ; have gone Abroad in good Health, and in the Night, before they returned Home, a sudden Indisposition has taken them. This, at first was not regarded, on a Supposition, that it would soon pass ; but not passing, a Physician has been sent for, he came, and bid the sick Man to have Courage, assured him there was no Danger, and prescribed Remedies. These had no Effect, the Sicknes grew stronger and the Patient died. May not this be called sudden and unexpected ? And who can tell how soon it may be his own Case ? Let us not flatter ourselves with Youth or being in the Prime of our Strength and Years. The
Man

Man whom our Saviour raised to Life was a young Man, when he was arrested by Death. Ah, Christians! nothing is more uncertain than the Time when we shall die. Nothing more certain than that we must die.

But, what ought to be the Result of these Reflections upon Death? Does it not follow that we ought diligently to prepare ourselves for it. It is certainly no less our Interest than our Duty so to do. This cannot be denied, and yet, how many are quite careless and negligent herein? Terrible will be the Consequences of such Carelessness; for ignorant as we are, when Death will come, if it finds us unprepared, we shall die so, and be eternally miserable; whereas, if, by the constant Exercise of a virtuous holy Life, we are ready and prepared, Death will be to us a short Transition from the Miseries of this World to the Happiness of the next. Nor must we flatter ourselves with mistaken Notions of a Death-bed Repentance, or of preparing ourselves in our last Sickness: That is, of all other Times the most improper for an Affair of so much Consequence. When our last Sickness comes, we should be ready, and it is only to deceive ourselves to put off our Preparation till our last Hour. Such a Proceeding is to tempt God, and may justly provoke him to take us away suddenly, and not allow us a moment of Time. Many sad Examples have been of such unfortunate procrastinating Souls, who having put off their Preparation for Death from one Time

to another, from this Time till that, at last found no Time at all, and have died in their Sins. To prevent which Misfortune, now, while we have Time, let us seriously prepare for our latter End. A good Life is the best Preparation for a good Death, and by dying well, we shall be happy for ever.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O thou eternal Author of all Things ! Thou sovereign Lord of Life and Death ! Imprint deep in my Mind the Remembrance of my last End. Make me frequently to consider, that I must die. This is the Sentence thou hast pronounced upon all Men, nor do I wish for, or seek an Exemption. I submit to thy Decrees, O wise Disposer of all Things, and am truly content that my Life and Death are in thy Hands. I know, O Lord, that if I love and serve thee, I shall have no Reason to be afraid of Death, which will then be only a short Passage to eternal Life. *To die, to me is Gain.* Phil. 1. And I desire to be dissolved that I may be happy. Happy with thee for ever.

O merciful God in whose Hands are all the Moments of my Life ! Thou hast told me I must die ; but has wisely concealed from me both the Time when, and the Manner how. 'This thou hast done, dear Lord, that I may keep myself in a constant Readiness, and be prepared when Death comes. I bow down and adore thy merciful Providence, and submit

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to thy holy Will in all Things. I am ready and content to die, this Day, this Hour, or at any other Time; when, where, and in what Manner thou shalt think fit, or please to ordain. Thou art my sovereign Lord, and to thee do I submit myself and my dearest Concerns. One Favour I most humbly beg, which may thy Mercy vouchsafe to grant. Take me not hence with my Sins unpardoned, and before, by true Penance, I have reconciled myself to thee. Make me, dear Lord, by thy Grace, first fit for thee, and then take me to thyself in thy own good Time.

Sixteenth

Sixteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Luke* xiv. 1.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus went into the House of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath-Day to eat Bread, that they watched him. 2. And behold there was a certain Man before him that had the Dropsy. 3. And Jesus answering, spoke to the Lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Day? 4. But they held their Peace. And he taking him, healed him, and sent him away. 5. And answering them he said: Which of you shall have an Ass or an Ox fall into a Pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-Day? 6. And they could not answer him to these Things. 7. And he spoke a Parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first
Seats

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Seats at Table, saying to them: 8. When thou art invited to a Wedding, sit not down in the first Place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him. 9. And he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, give this Man Place: And then thou begin with Shame to take the lowest Place. 10. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest Place: that when he who inviteth thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: Then shalt thou have Glory before them that sit at the Table with thee. 11. Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

The Gospel of this *Sunday* is an excellent Instruction how to behave ourselves in all Stations of Life, with Regard to our Neighbours as well as to ourselves. As Men are created by God, sociable Beings, and by the Dispensations of his Providence in the various Circumstances of Life, are engaged, and obliged to a mutual Intercourse one with another, it is highly necessary that this Intercourse be so managed, as to answer the Ends for which it is designed. The Life of our Blessed Saviour upon Earth was an excellent Pattern of all social Virtues, and from him we may learn how to live with others to theirs, and our mutual Comfort and Advantage. The holy Jesus was
invited

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invited by one of the Chief of the Pharisees to eat Bread with him on the Sabbath-Day, he accepted the Invitation that he might have Occasion in Return for the Civility to rectify the mistaken Notions of the Pharisees, in some of the most important Duties of a social Life.

The Evangelist observes, that when our Blessed Saviour entered the Pharisee's House, those who were present watched him, desirous to find something in his Conduct for which they might accuse him. This shews there was nothing of due Regard or Sincerity in the Invitation, but a concerted Design to lay Hold of what Jesus Christ might say, or do, in order to traduce him among the People. A base, ungenerous Way of proceeding, destructive of Society, and to be carefully avoided. Sincerity in our Intentions, as well as in our Actions, is what we ought principally to observe in Regard of one another. Where this Sincerity is wanting, there can be no mutual Confidence, without which the Ends of Society can never be obtained. As the Ends of Society in civil Life are mutual Help and Assistance, it is unreasonable to expect, and impossible to find it from those who are not sincere, whose Profession of Kindness, and Offers of Service, are but a Cloak to some hidden and sinister Design. Such a Behaviour is indeed universally condemned, yet there is too much Ground to complain of an almost general Practice of it. And though we find it reprov'd and condemned in the Pharisees by our Divine Master, there
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are too many who call themselves Christians, and his Followers, who act in this manner towards their Neighbours. But we ought to consider that this is not only opposite to the Spirit of Christ and his holy Gospel, but is also contrary to that great Law of Nature, of doing as we would be done by. This is that natural first Principle we bring with us into the World, and from which we ought never to vary, or go aside. We naturally expect and desire that others would act sincerely with us, and we ought upon all Occasions to shew the same Sincerity with them. Our Actions and our Intentions ought to correspond, the one to be a sure Index to the other, and both directed by this great Principle. Was this duly regarded, a new Face of Things would soon appear. Fraud, Injustice and Deceit would be no more complained of. The Ends of Society would be easily obtained, and Men would live like Men and Christians. To the Want of this is owing all those unhappy Feuds and Dissentions which inflame Kingdoms, trouble Nations, and prove the Destruction of many private Families. Nor will it ever be otherwise, while we undermine and deceive one another. To remedy the Evil, is in all Respects to act with the utmost Sincerity towards one another. This is a Duty we owe to the Body Politick of which we are Members, and is still incumbent upon us as Christians, and profess the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who has bid us, in all Things to do, as we would be done by, and has assured

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us, that this is the whole Law, and the Prophets, as fulfilling the Precepts both of one and the other, *St. Matt. vii.*

Another necessary Rule of our Conduct towards our Neighbour, is not to be jealous or suspicious of him, nor be easily scandalized or offended at his Behaviour. In this the Pharisees were very deficient, and for that were frequently reprov'd by our Blessed Saviour. It is a Property of Charity, according to *St. Paul*, not to think Evil, to suffer all Things, and to bear all Things. As Men, we are liable to a thousand Mistakes, and from the Frailty of our Nature, Predominancy of our Passions, and Weakness of our Understanding, are subject to many Errors and Faults: Therefore, as well from the grand Principle I have mentioned, as from the excellent Maxims of our holy Religion, are to make charitable Allowances one to another. A forward censorious Temper, judging and condemning our Neighbours Actions at first Sight, without allowing any Apology, or hearing what may be said in his Behalf is directly contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel. Our Duty is, to put the best and most charitable Construction we can upon his Words and Actions; and before we pass Judgment, consider what may be alledged in Favour of him. How far Inadvertency, Surprise, Weakness and the Force of Temptation may have influenced him. A great Difference is to be made between single Acts and Habits. No Body becomes an habitual Sinner from

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from one or two Acts ; nor is to be considered as such. If Charity thus directed us, our Judgments would neither be severe and rash, as they generally are. As far as we are deficient in this charitable Spirit, in Regard of our Neighbour, so far are we wanting in one of the essential Duties we owe him, and transgress one of the great Rules of social Life. Let us endeavour to imitate our Divine Master, the holy Jesus, who not only bore with the strange and perverse Behaviour of the Scribes and Pharisees, but with all charitable Condescension and Goodness endeavoured to correct their Judgments, and reform their Vices ; and omitted nothing that might be reasonably required to remove the Prejudices they had against him, and his holy Doctrine ; and from hence we may learn another useful Rule for our Conduct towards our Neighbours, which is a proper Condescension, as far as lawfully may be done, to his Weakness and Imperfections, and when, at any Time he takes Exceptions or Offence to be ready and willing to give a reasonable Satisfaction in order to remove ill-grounded Prejudices. This mutual bearing with and condescending to one another will admirably keep up and maintain a social Life, and make us daily experience the Happiness and Comforts of it.

Our Blessed Lord knew the Prejudices the Pharisees had to his Person and Doctrine. He knew their outward Preciseness in Regard of the Sabbath, yet he would cure the sick Man
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on the Sabbath-Day, and, at the same Time, prudently to remove any Scandal they might take, first asked them in general if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Day. They made no Answer, as not daring to say, a good Work ought not to be done on those Days. Our Saviour seeing them in Suspence what to reply, cured the sick Man, and then with a great Deal of Mildness put them in Mind of their own Practice in Regard of an Ox or an Ass fallen into a Pit on the Sabbath-Day: From whence they themselves might easily infer that it was equally, or rather more lawful to heal a sick Man, and this without violating the Respect due to the Sabbath. It is true that when any one takes a causeless Scandal, and is disedified without Reason, we may overlook it, as we are not obliged to deprive ourselves of an innocent Liberty for the unjust and groundless Prejudices of others: Yet, in many Cases, Prudence and Charity to our Neighbours oblige us to have a due Consideration of his Weakness. *All Things are lawful,* says St. Paul, *but all Things are not expedient,* 1 Cor. vi. *Wherefore, if Meat,* says the same Apostle, *scandalize my Brother, I will never eat Flesh, lest I should scandalize my Brother.* Id. viii. To scorn and condemn the Weakness of another, who may be apt to take Offence at certain Liberties we may take, and think innocent, is oftentimes an Effect of Pride, and a too great Value for our own Judgment. True Charity is always compassionate, and condescending

scending on Occasions: And the more unjust and unreasonable some are in their Prejudices, the more sick and infirm they may be said to be; and the more sick and infirm they are, the more worthy and deserving of our Compassion.

If these Rules were observed as they ought, mutual Confidence and Esteem, with a proper mutual Regard, would render that Intercourse we are obliged to have one with another, truly useful and comfortable, and would effectually answer the Ends of that Society ordained by God. Sanctified by these Christian Motives, it would be no less advantageous for the other World than for this: And the Blessings and Comforts of this Life would be succeeded by the Joy and Happiness of the next.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Jesus, my most merciful and kind Redeemer! Deliver me from all Malice and Envy, and the sad Effects of them, rash Judgments, and censuring my Neighbour. Give me, O Blessed Jesus, a tender and compassionate Temper for the Weaknesses and Imperfections of others. Give me a truly charitable Spirit, always ready to do Good to others. Purify my Heart, and rectify the Interiour of my Soul. Fill me with holy Desires, and give me a pure and upright Intention in all I speak or do. Root out of my Heart all Pride, Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, and
plant

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plant therein Meekness, Patience, Charity, Sincerity and all those Virtues which may make me pleasing and acceptable to thee.

O Jesus, my adorable Master, how different alas ! is my Conduct from thine ? With admirable Sweetness and Condescension thou endeavourest to work upon thy spiteful and declared Enemies. Thou didst perfectly know all their insidious Designs, their deep Diffimulation, hid under the Veil of outward Civility, yet, didst accept of their Invitation, that thou mightest by thy Goodness overcome their Malice. And I, wretched Sinner as I am, cannot bear the least Contradiction. Full of Pride, Jealousy and Distrust, I rashly judge and condemn my Neighbour. O thou only Physician of Souls, cure these monstrous Disorders, and give me a better Spirit. Make me truly mild, meek, patient, charitable and condescending as thou art. Give me Grace seriously to endeavour to correct and amend my own great Faults, and charitably to bear with the Weaknesses and Imperfections of others.

Seventeenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Matt.* xxii. 34.

BUT the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Saducees, came together. 35. And one of them, a Doctor of the Law, asked of him: 36. Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37. Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole Heart, with thy whole Soul, and with thy whole Mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment. 38. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. 39. On these two Commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets. 40. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them; 41. Saying: What think you of Christ? Whose Son
is

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is he? They say to him: *David's*. 42. He saith to them: How then doth *David* in Spirit call him Lord, saying: 43. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit on my Right-hand, untill I make thine Enemies the Footstool of thy Feet? 44. If *David* then call him Lord, how is he his Son? 45. And no Man was able to answer him a Word: Neither durst any Man from that Day forth ask him any more Questions.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

The Scribes and Pharisees, implacable and restless Enemies of Jesus Christ, not satisfied with being often put to Confusion by him, hearing that he had silenced the *Saducees*, resolved to make another Attempt to ensnare him in his Discourse, that they might have a plausible Pretence to proceed against him. They committed the Execution of this treacherous Design to a Doctor of their Law, expecting from his Cunning and Abilities something that might answer their Desires. We may observe from that Chapter of St. *Matthew*, from whence the Gospel of this *Sunday* is taken, that our Blessed Lord was attacked by three different Sorts of Enemies, who, though at great Difference among themselves, yet concurred together in a Design to tempt Christ. The first were the *Herodians*, who tempted him concerning paying Tribute-Money to *Cæsar*. The second were the *Saducees*, who
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thought to ensnare him by a Question concerning the Resurrection. The Third were the Pharisees mentioned in this Gospel, who seemed desirous of knowing which was the greatest Commandment. From all these Snares Jesus Christ disengaged himself by Answers worthy of his eternal Wisdom, and which silenced his Adversaries beyond the Power of Reply, and covered them with Shame and Confusion. He then put a Question to them, and asked them what was their Opinion of Christ, or the Messias, whose Son he was, and from their Reply put them to still further Confusion, so as that none of them durst any more ask him any Thing. The Question put by our Blessed Saviour to the Pharisees, in the literal Sense seems only to regard them. Yet may, without any forced Interpretation, be put to Christians, who, in that Character seem to acknowledge Christ to be, not only the Son of *David*, but also the Son of God, but, in Reality, it is to be feared, that many do not esteem him so, as their Behaviour is so contradictory to their Profession, that they seem rather, like the Pharisees, to reject him.

That the Pharisees were guilty of a very great and obstinate Impiety, in refusing to own Jesus Christ, and treating him as an Imposter, is evident from the undeniable Proofs he gave that he was the Son of God, and their promised Messias. But the Impiety is greater of those Christians who pretend to confess him by their Profession of Faith, and yet deny him in

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their Actions, by living contrary to the Principles of that Faith : A Belief of Christianity ought to be accompanied with a Christian Life. The Belief of those sacred Truths this Religion teaches, obliges us to observe the Rules it prescribes. Where this Observance is wanting, the Name of Christian will only serve to enhance the Guilt of those who bear the sacred Character, but by their wicked and sinful Lives shew nothing less than what that Name imports. The Pharisees rejected Christ, and would not own him for their Messias. They rejected his holy Doctrine in Consequence of rejecting him. But for Christians, who profess him to be Christ, the Son of God : To believe in him : To acknowledge his Gospel ; and yet to live in direct Opposition to the Maxims of that holy Gospel, is wonderful and surprising. To condemn the Pharisees for not owning him to be the Son of God, and while we confess him in Words, to deny him by Actions, must be an Impiety much greater than theirs. If we will not be governed by his Law, why do we profess to believe that Law ? Why do we glory in it ? If we will not obey him, why do we call him our Lord and Master ? Strange Paradox ! Surprising Contradiction ! We submit to all the speculative Truth of the Christian Religion, and will not observe, or rather we deny the practical ones. To deny Christ and reject his holy Gospel, was a great Folly and Impiety in the *Jews*, but they were more reasonable, and more excusable than wicked Christians.

stians. Ask the one why they do not live according to the Gospel? They will reply, because we do not receive it. Ask the other why they receive the Gospel, and yet live so contrary to it? They can give no Reason, are silent, and thereby stand Self-convicted of the most preposterous, as well as sinful Folly.

But, are there any such? Do we not mistake, and see Things in a wrong Light? Alas! the Supposition is grounded upon Facts clear and evident. To shew this, let us examine and then pass our Judgement. The Character of a Christian; The Precepts of the Gospel oblige us to be humble, meek, patient and charitable. Yet how many Christians are there whose Behaviour is quite the Reverse? How many who are proud and ambitious; who know nothing, or at least practise nothing of the Humility of the Gospel? Can the passionate Christian, who is moved to anger at every Trifle; who bears Resentment and Malice against his Neighbour; can such a one imagine himself more than a Christian in name, while he wilfully violates the express Command of his Divine Master? If to be true Disciples of Jesus Christ, we must be charitable, love one another, and forgive Injuries; I need only allege the great Want of Charity in many, their mutual Hatred and Animosity, their vindictive Spirit and resenting Temper, to shew that whatever they pretend to in Words, in Facts they deny the Gospel, and consequently the Author of it. The Spirit of the Gospel is a

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Spirit of Moderation and Temperance, a Contempt of the World and its unlawful Pleasures. Now, where the Behaviour of this is quite the Reverse, what Judgement can be made of their Sincerity in professing to believe in Jesus Christ? When Intemperance and Debauch, Extravagancy and an excessive Fondness of the World, its Pleasures, sinful Modes and Customs are so conspicuous in their Conduct, can such be looked upon as any but meer nominal Christians? When the great Duties of Religion, Prayer, the holy Sacraments and the Word of God are neglected. When Christians are quite careless and negligent in the Service of God, and apply all their Care and Diligence in that of this World, and think little or nothing of the next, such Christians must forfeit their Character, since Truth himself has told us, that then, and then only are we his Disciples, when we do what he has commanded us, and at the same Time to say we confess him to be our Lord and our God, makes our Impiety much greater, and more criminal than that of the Pharisees, who would not own him, and because they did not own him, would not obey him. This may be abundantly sufficient to shew the indispensable Obligation we lie under to live like Christians, and as it becomes our holy Profession. If we will not, we may as well renounce all Pretensions to that sacred Character. It was the Advice of *St. Augustin* to the wicked Christians of his Time: *Aut*
Nomen

Nomen, aut Mores muta. Either change your Manners, or your Name.

It is certainly a great Happiness to be a Christian; to confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and to believe his holy Gospel. Our Saviour told his Disciples they were happy in seeing the Things which they saw, and in hearing the Things which they heard. This is the Happiness we enjoy, and deserves the most grateful Return we can make; but we can only make it, as we ought, by seriously endeavouring to let the Gospel of Christ be the sole Rule of our Conduct, to live like Christians who truly believe in Jesus Christ. The further to enforce this we may consider that one great Article of the Faith we profess, is, that Jesus Christ, who came into the World to save us, will come again to judge us, and to him we are to render an Account of all our Actions. How careful ought this to make us! how sedulous and diligent to live so, that we may appear before him, and give up our Accounts with a holy Confidence. This none but the practical Christian can hope to do. By a practical Christian is to be understood him who makes an outward Profession of his Faith, and shews the Fruits of this Faith in a holy Life, and a careful Observance of the Commands of God. May this be deeply imprinted in our Minds, and never slip our Memory. On this Principle let us act, and we shall be safe. As for those who do not, they must expect to be numbered among the Enemies of Christ, and

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will, one Day, feel the dreadful Effects of his Wrath and Indignation. May we never be of that unhappy Number, but of those to whom he will say: *Come ye Blessed of my Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World, St. Matt. xxv.*

ASPIRATIONS.

Adorable Jesus, how ungrateful and obstinate were the *Jews* ! Thou didst endeavour by all the gentle Ways of Love and Bounty to work upon their Hearts, and to persuade them to their own Happiness and to believe in thee. But in vain. They sought all Occasions to ensnare thee by captious Questions. They censured thy heavenly Doctrine. They found Fault with thy Charity, traduced thy Miracles, and conspired against thy sacred Person and to take away thy Life.

O let me never be obstinate in resisting thy gracious Calls, nor condemn thy Admonitions. I confess thee, O Christ, to be the Son and Lord of *David*, my Lord and my God. As I thus confess thee, may I love and obey thee and be ever faithful to thee. O that all the World might know thee, love and serve thee ! O that I could be so happy as to bring all Sinners to thee by Repentance and a sincere Conversion. Give me an ardent Zeal for the Salvation of Souls. May I spare no Pains, nor refuse any Labour to bring Souls to thee.
Bless

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Bless my Endeavours with Success, and to thee alone be all the Glory.

Thou hast said, dear Jesus, it is not enough to call thee Lord, Lord, unless I do the Will of thy heavenly Father. O may I, by the Assistance of thy Grace always, and in all Things do his holy Will, and thereby shew myself thy true Disciple and Follower. May I follow thee in those Ways of Humility, Patience, Charity and Love which thou hast marked out for me, and wherein thou hast walked before me that I may sincerely love thee, and my Neighbour. Give me that Love of thee which may burn and entirely consume all earthly Desires; that I may perfectly die to this World, and live only and alone to thee.

Eighteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* ix. 1.

AND entering into a Boat, he passed over the Water and came into his own City, 2. And behold they brought to him one sick of the Palsy lying on a Bed. And Jesus seeing their Faith, said to the Man sick of the Palsy : Be of good Heart, Son, thy Sins are forgiven thee. 3. And behold some of the Scribes said within themselves : He blasphemeth. 4. And Jesus seeing their Thoughts, said : Why do you think Evil in your Hearts ? 5. Whether is easier, to say : Thy Sins are forgiven thee : or to say, Arise and walk. 6. But that you may know that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins (then said he to the Man sick of the Palsy) Arise, take up thy Bed,

Bed, and go into thy House. 7. And he arose, and went into his House. And the Multitudes seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such Power to Men.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

The Condition of the poor Man mentioned in the Gospel was truly miserable and rendered him a just Object of Pity. We cannot read or hear of his sad Case, and not feel some tender Emotions of Compassion for him: But if we consider it with Regard to ourselves, we shall find his miserable Condition to be full of useful Instruction for us. He was ill of a Palsy, unable to help himself, and was forced to use the Assistance of some charitable Friends, who laid him on a Bed, and carried him to Christ. The holy Jesus moved with Compassion, said to him: *Sin, be of good Heart, thy Sins are forgiven thee.* By which it appears that the poor Man was not only sick in his Body by a Palsy, but was also sick in his Soul by Sin, and that God had afflicted him in his Body by Illness, to bring about a Cure for his Soul. Had he not been ill of the Palsy, probably he would never have thought of going to Jesus, and, like other *Jews*, might have died in his Sins. His Sickneis made him sensible of his sad Condition, and to have a Recourse to Christ for a Remedy. Christ who knew the Secrets of his Heart, beheld his Faith, his Humility and penitent Disposition. He comforted him with

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those sweet Words, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee.* And having thus cured his Soul, by the Pardon of his Sins, he restored Health to his Body, bidding him, *rise up and walk.* Sickneſs is oftentimes the Conſequence of Sin; a paternal Chaiſement and Admonition from God to repent and amend. Thoſe corporal Evils which we bring upon ourſelves by our Vices are juſt Punishments, but deſigned for our Benefit, and are likewise great Mercies, and ought to be looked upon as ſuch. Happy Afflictions which bring us to a Senſe of our Duty, and make us ſenſible of the ſad Effects of Sin? Happy Sickneſs, which ſtirſ up in us a Deſire to go to God in an humble Acknowledgement of his Juſtice, and to ſue for Mercy? This he has promiſed to ſhew, when by Faith, Humility and a ſincere Repentance we diſpoſe ourſelves for it. He will then ſay to all ſuch truly penitent Sinners: *Son, be of good Heart, thy Sins are forgiven thee.*

Our Bleſſed Saviour having ſaid to the ſick Man: *Take up thy Bed, and go into thy Houſe.* He roſe up, and went to his Houſe, perfectly cured in Body and Soul, by the Recovery of his Health and in the Pardon of his Sins. When God pardons our Sins in the Sacrament of Penance, he bids us riſe up, and go to our Houſes. That is, we muſt riſe and walk in the Road of his holy Commandments, and doing his holy Will, by which we ſhall be led to Heaven, which is properly our Houſe. Here on Earth we have no ſettled Habitation

or Abiding Place, as the Apostle tells us, *Heb. xiii.* This Life is only a Passage or Way. By Sin we go out of our Road, we become sick and feeble and unable to prosecute our Journey, till by the Mercy of God, upon our Repentance we are cured, and put into the right Way again. After which we must be careful not wilfully to relapse into Sin, and fall into those Evils from which we have been cured. This is what Christ told the Paralytick whom he cured at the Pool at *Bethsaida*: *Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse Thing happen to thee,* St. *John v.* If we make no other Use of the Mercies of God than to abuse them by wilful Relapses into those Sins we have repented of, we must expect a severe Punishment for our Ingratitude. If we wilfully lose our Way and go out of our Road, when we have been so often put into it, we must never expect to arrive at Heaven, or go into our House. We may, like the foolish Virgins, knock at the Door, and say: *Lord, Lord, open to us:* But the Answer will be: *Amen, I say unto you, I know you not,* St. *Matt. xxv.* The Consideration of this ought to make us extremely careful: And while, on one Hand, we are encouraged, by the Mercy of God, to have Recourse to him with true Repentance for the Pardon of our Sins: On the other Hand we ought to be afraid of provoking his Justice by careless and wilful Relapses. For if we continue to return like *the Dog to his Vomit, or the Sow which is washed to her wallowing in the Mire,*

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Mire, 2 St. *Pet.* ii. the Consequence may be, that *we die in our Sins*, St. *John* viii. and are eternally lost.

We may further consider for our Instruction, that our Blessed Saviour having by a Miracle cured the sick Man, and by that Miracle proved his Power to forgive Sins, the Multitude were struck with Fear and glorified God. From hence, Christians, we may learn to fear God, and to glorify him. To fear his Justice and to glorify his Mercy. His Power is infinite, and he can do whatever he pleases. We have then good Reason to stand in Fear of him, and to tremble at the very Apprehension of provoking him by Sin, who can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell. This our Blessed Lord himself gives as a Reason why we should fear God rather than Men, saying: *I say unto you, be not afraid of them who kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will shew you whom you shall fear: Fear ye him who after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell. Yea, I say to you, fear him*, St. *Luke* xii. This Fear of God is called in Scripture the Beginning of Wisdom, *Ecc.* i. And while we thus fear to offend him, we may have a Confidence in his Mercy, which is, as I may say, his darling Attribute, and which he delights to shew to the Sons of Men. We all of us daily, in a thousand Instances, experience this his Mercy, and ought to praise and glorify him for the same. How many Favours both spiritual and temporal has he bestowed upon us.

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He has given Power to Men, his Ministers, the Priests of his Church, in his Name to say : *Thy Sins are forgiven thee. Arise, take up thy Bed and go into thy House.* Have not we often experienced this Effect of his Power and Goodness in the holy Sacrament of Penance, wherein our sick Souls have been healed in the Pardon of our Sins? How many other Spiritual Mercies, how many gracious Calls and Invitations has he given us! How many Graces has he bestowed upon us? Let us with the warmest Sentiments of Gratitude acknowledge them, and with Heart and Voice praise and glorify him. Many are the temporal Blessings which he has favoured us with, and for which we ought daily to glorify his holy Name. To be wanting in this, is to shew ourselves as unworthy as we are insensible of his Favours. But we must here take Care not to deceive ourselves, and think it sufficient to do this with our Lips only, we must do it from our Hearts. Our Gratitude must not be expressed in Words alone, but must shew itself in our Actions by a right Use of his Mercies. God chiefly regards our Heart touched with a Sense of our Duty. Thus to praise and glorify him, is a sure Means to procure a Continuance of his Bounty to us. It is in this Sense those Words of our Blessed Saviour are to be understood : *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, St. Luke viii.* Nothing renders us more deserving of Divine Graces and Benefits than by a right Use to correspond to the Design for which they are bestowed

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bestowed upon us. This is to glorify God here, and by thus glorifying him in this World, we shall come to be happy in the next, where he will crown all his other Mercies with a never-ending Felicity in the Kingdom of Heaven.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Bounty of Jesus! how tender and compassionate art thou, dear Redeemer of Mankind! Thou hadst Pity on the poor Man sick of the Palsy, and didst mercifully forgive him his Sins and restore him to Health. Have the same Pity and Compassion for me; for, behold, O Lord, I am very sick. I am troubled with the sad Palsy of Sin, from which I can be delivered, only by thee. Heal me then, O thou sovereign Physician of Souls. Behold the sad Condition to which I am reduced. Lay thy Hand upon me, and I shall be cured. Speak the Word only, and I shall be healed.

This Mercy thou hast often bestowed upon me, O bountiful Saviour! I have often experienced thy Goodness in the Pardon of my Sins, and in many other Favours thou hast conferred upon me. May your holy Name be ever praised and glorified for the same. I will praise and glorify thee, O my good and gracious Lord God. Glory be to thee, who art truly wonderful in the Effects of thy Mercy to penitent Sinners. Glory be to thee for all the Graces and Favours thou hast bestowed upon me. Great is thy Power, O Lord, and how ought
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I to fear thee! Great is thy Goodness and Mercy; and how ought I to praise and love thee. Fill my Heart with an ardent Love of thee, and may thy Honour and Glory be the sole and ultimate End of all I do.

Magnify the Lord, O my Soul! and sing aloud the Wonders of his Goodness. Bless the Lord, O my Soul! and all that is within me praise his holy Name. Bless the Lord, all you who fear the Lord. Praise and glorify him for ever. Thus will I magnify thee, O my God, and thus will praise thee while I have a Being. O may I constantly love and bless thee here; and for ever love and enjoy thee hereafter.

Nineteenth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* xxii. 1.

AND Jesus answering, spoke again in Parables to them, saying: 2. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a King, who made a Marriage for his Son. 3. And he sent his Servants to call them that were invited to the Marriage: And they would not come. 4. Again he sent other Servants, saying: Tell them that were invited. Behold, I have prepared my Dinner; my Beeves and Fatlings are killed, and all Things are ready: Come ye to the Marriage. 5. But they neglected, and went their Ways, one to his Farm and another to his Merchandize. 6. And the rest laid Hands on his Servants, and having treated them contumeliously put them to Death. 7. But
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when the King had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his Armies, he destroyed those Murderers, and burnt their City. Then he saith to his Servants : The Marriage indeed is ready : But they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the Highways ; and as many as you shall find call to the Marriage. 10. And his Servants going forth into the Ways ; gathered together all that they found, both good and bad : And the Marriage was filled with Guests. 11. And the King went in to see the Guests : And he saw there a Man who had not on a Wedding Garment. 12. And he saith to him : Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on a Wedding Garment ? But he was silent. 13. Then the King said to the Waiters : Bind his Hands and Feet, and cast him into the exterior Darkeness : There shall be Weeping and gnashing of Teeth. 14. For many are called, but few are chosen.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

Among the many admirable and significant Parables delivered by our Blessed Saviour, and recorded in the sacred Oracles, that which has been read in the Gospel for this *Sunday* seems to require a serious and particular Attention ; not because the Meaning of it is hard, or difficult to comprehend. The Meaning is very obvious, and the Application easy to be made. But it deserves our serious Attention in this Regard, that as on one Hand it represents the
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exceeding great Goodness of God inviting every one to the Happiness of Heaven signified by a Marriage Feast: so, on the other Hand, it shews the great Ingratitude of many who refuse the Invitation; and the equal Folly of others, who go, but without the necessary Dispositions, and presuming to appear at the Marriage Feast without a Wedding Garment are rejected and turned out. This is what we ought seriously to reflect upon, that we may not incur the Guilt of those who refused to go; nor be involved in the criminal Folly of him who sat down to Table without a Wedding Garment. The one as well as the other will be attended with the worst of Consequences. At present let us consider the Case of him who had not a Wedding Garment, and therefore was excluded the Marriage Feast. From his Case we may learn our Duty and what is of the utmost Importance to us.

As the Kingdom of Heaven is proposed to our Consideration under the Similitude of a Marriage Feast, what we are to do, in order to be admitted into that Kingdom is very aptly signified by a Nuptial Garment. If we desire to sit down at the Marriage Feast, and to share in that Happiness to which God invites us, we must prepare and adorn ourselves with such a Nuptial Garment as may procure us Admittance and a Place at that heavenly Table. By this Nuptial Garment is to be understood Charity, or the Love of God, in which arrayed, as in a white Robe without Spot, or Stain, we may

may be found worthy to be admitted among those, who thus clad, shall be called to the spiritual Nuptials of the Lamb. By Charity or the Love of God is not here to be understood a single Virtue, or the Love of God as it may be considered a different Virtue from the rest: But being the Chief and Principal, is here mentioned as including the rest; and as an Abridgment of all Christian Duties, or an Observance of all that is required at our Hands, as Christians. The Man in the Gospel who went into the Feast without a Wedding Garment is a just and instructive Representation of those mistaken Christians who think it enough to have Faith and to believe in Jesus Christ, and upon that Assurance imagine they are sufficiently qualified to partake of the heavenly Banquet. How far such deceive themselves, they may learn from the Fate of this Man, who was ordered to be bound Hands and Feet, and to cast into outward Darkness, where was Weeping and gnashing of Teeth.

If Faith alone was sufficient, Christ would never have told the Lawyer, *That to enter into Life he was to keep the Commandments*, St. Matt. xix. Nor would St. Paul and St. James have told us, that *Faith without Works is dead*. It is then by good Works, Works suitable to the Profession we make of believing in Jesus Christ that we must adorn our Souls, and procure ourselves the Nuptial Garment here mentioned. Then will our Faith be that which the Apostle recommends, and calls a
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Faith working by Love, perfected by Charity. This is that Garment which when clean, and without Spot will make us agreeable to the Eyes of him who invites us to the Marriage Feast. By having it clean and without Spot, is to keep ourselves from being defiled by Sin; or if we have contracted any such Stain, immediately to wash out those Stains with the Water of true Contrition and Penance. For Heaven being a Place into which nothing defiled or unclean shall enter, as we are assured by the sacred Oracles of God, we must not deceive ourselves by imaginary Notions of gaining an Admittance on our own Terms. And though he graciously invites us, and sends his Ministers and Servants to bid us come: Though he excepts none, as appears by the Blind and the Lame, the Good and the Bad whom the Servants found in the Ways, and brought to the Feast? yet he expects that every one should render himself, in some Measure, worthy, and in proper Dispositions to partake of the Happiness to which he invites them. This is so just, and reasonable as not to admit of any Dispute, or to be questioned. This is a Condition no Ways hard or unreasonable, nor can we, without being self-condemned refuse to comply with it.

As this Nuptial Garment is to be clean and without Spot, that is, our Conscience to be undefiled by Sin, or if any Stains contracted to wash them away by true Contrition and Sorrow; for the right Understanding of this,
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we may consider that there are different Ways and different Degrees by which our Souls may be defiled, and according to which we shall be more or less unfit to appear at this Marriage Feast. All Sin, speaking of it in general, defiles the Soul, and renders it unworthy of the Happiness to which it is invited; there are indeed Degrees of sinning, and much Difference in the Enormity and Guilt of Sin, yet the least Sin, wilfully committed, is of that Nature as to render us offensive to the Eyes of God, and consequently every Spot or Stain of this Kind must be cleansed. But grievous and wilful mortal Sins quite spoil the Garment, and if we have the Misfortune to have defiled ourselves with this spiritual Dirt, as it may be called, we must use our sincere and most laborious Endeavours to cleanse our Conscience from it. Pertinent to this, we may observe that the poor Man, in the Gospel, was not condemned for appearing among the Guests, without any Garment at all, but for not having on a Wedding Garment, suitable to the Place where he was, and the Entertainment to which he was invited. We must therefore take Care not only that we be clad with the Garment of true Faith, but that this Garment be adorned with good Works in a holy Life and Conversation, then shall we be admitted, and allowed to sit down at this heavenly Banquet, and partake of these exceeding good Things which God has prepared for those who love and serve him.

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That this is truly a Matter of very great Importance, will doubtless, be granted by every Christian. I may, I ought to suppose, that every one will readily subscribe to this Truth; and acknowledge it to be of the utmost Consequence to him. I shall therefore conclude the Reflections on this Day's holy Gospel with seriously exhorting every one to be careful in this necessary Affair. We are informed from the Parable, that every one, the Poor, the Blind and the Lame, that is, every one, of whatever State or Degree, is invited to be happy; *for with God there is no Exception of Persons*, Col. vi. If any are excluded this Marriage Feast, they are only those who ungratefully and insolently refuse the Invitation given them; or those who take no Care to cloathe themselves as they ought by the Practice of Virtue, and the Duties which are incumbent upon them as Christians. If such are rejected and sent away none can blame or censure the Master of the Feast as hard or severe. No, no, the Blame is to be laid, and justly too, upon themselves. If it was not in our Power to do what is required of us, something might be said that would excuse us; but to assert this, is to contradict the whole Tenor of the Word of God which lays down Rules neither impossible nor hard to be observed by the Assistance of divine Grace, which God will never refuse to those who ask it. Now therefore, *while we have Time and Opportunity, let us do Good, and thereby make our Calling and Election sure*, Gal.

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Gal. vi. 2 St. Pet. i. Let us have our Loins girt, that, is, all our inordinate Passions and sinful Inclinations kept under and restrained. Let us have Lamps in our Hearts shining bright from the Oil of Charity and good Works, that when the Bridegroom comes we may be ready and prepared to enter into the Marriage Feast, and thus adorned with a Wedding Garment be admitted to sit down at the heavenly Table, and with all the Saints and faithful Servants of God be eternally happy.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O Jesus, my adorable Master, my sovereign Lord and King! How loving, how bountiful art thou in our Regard! Thou hast prepared a royal Banquet for us in thy heavenly Kingdom, and dost graciously invite us to come and partake of the good Things thou hast provided for us. O my God! my Life and all my Good! shall I be so foolish and ungrateful as to refuse thy kind Invitation? Dear Lord, may this Ingratitude be far from me. Excite in my Soul a most ardent Desire to come to this royal Feast. Neither Farms nor Merchandize, no worldly Business or Pleasure shall stop me from it, though but for a Moment, from obeying thy Call. O let it be all my Joy to possess thee, as it will be the greatest Misery to be deprived of thee.

My Lord and my God, I presume to come, but not trusting in any Merits of my own, but
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in thy Goodness and Mercy, through which I hope to find Admittance. O let me not come unprepared and unworthy. Vest me, dear Lord, with the Nuptial Garment of Charity, and the Love of thee and my Neighbour; that being adorned with good Works, by a faithful Observance of thy holy Law I may appear acceptable in thy Sight.

O God of Love, the only Happiness and Bliss of my Soul! I long to enjoy thee, and to be filled with the delicious Banquet thou hast prepared for those who love thee. Ah my God, my only Life and all my Good! What is there in this World, in this Place of Misery and Exile, that is comparable to thee, and the charming Delights of thy glorious Presence? I count and will esteem every Thing here as Filth and Dung, not worth a serious Thought. I contemn and despise all this World affords. Nothing here can satisfy, or content me. Thee do I seek. Thee do I wish for, and thee alone I desire. O Spouse of my Soul! come and take me to thyself, that I may possess and enjoy thee, praise and glorify thee for ever.

Twentieth *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *John* iv. 46.

HE came again therefore into *Cana* of *Gallilee*, where he made the Water Wine. And there was a certain Ruler whose Son was sick at *Capharnaum*. 47. He having heard that Jesus was come from *Judea* into *Gallilee*, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his Son ; for he was at the Point of Death. 48. Jesus therefore said to him : Unless you see Signs and Wonders you believe not. 49. The Ruler saith to him : Lord, come down before that my Son die. 50. Jesus saith to him, Go thy Way ; thy Son liveth. The Man believed the Word which Jesus said to him, and went his Way. 51. And as he was going down, his Servants met him ; and
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they brought Word, saying, that his Son lived. 52. He asked therefore of them the Hour, wherein he grew better. And they said to him, Yesterday at the seventh Hour the Fever left him. 53. The Father therefore knew that it was at the same Hour, that Jesus said to him, Thy Son liveth; and himself believed and his whole House.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

It seldom happens that a constant State of Prosperity proves an Occasion of a thorough Conversion to God, because that is too apt to cause an Attachment to the World, and those sensible and agreeable Objects such a State presents us with. Whereas Adversity, like an excellent School-Mistress, teaches us this true and useful Lesson, that to be truly happy, we must seek to be so in God alone, and not in Creatures, or any Thing in this World. Adversity separates us from, and draws off our Affections from the Enjoyments of this Life by letting us see how uncertain and unstable they are; that however we may abound in the Possession of them, a thousand unforeseen Accidents may interrupt our seeming Happiness by depriving us of them. This Privation helps to diminish the Affection, and puts us upon seeking something more solid and lasting, which being only to be found in God, our Troubles and Misfortunes prove happy Occasions which force us as it were to have Recourse to him. This may be, at first, with
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some Imperfection, but by Degrees that which was begun by Necessity, becomes our Choice, and we wisely chuse to adhere to him and his holy Service.

The Design of Providence in mingling the Sweets of this Life with Bitterness, and making Crosses and Misfortunes have so great a Share in the Occurrences which happen, is most certainly to draw us off from a criminal and too violent an Attachment to the World, and also to bring us to himself. They are designed to remove the Band which is unhappily before our Eyes, hindering us from discerning wherein our true Happiness consists, and seeing those Objects which much more deserve our Attention than what too often takes up our Thoughts, and engrosses the far greater Part of our Time and Labour. Ease and Quiet in the Enjoyment of what pleases us cause the Mistakes we frequently make in Relation to ourselves, as thinking then all is right, when every Thing goes well with us: Not reflecting that we may truly be the most miserable when we imagine ourselves most happy. Hence it is that God out of Mercy, and as the Effect of his Goodness to us, often interrupts this false Peace, and by depriving us of our imaginary Happiness, endeavours, as I may say, to let us see the Danger we are in of being eternally miserable. This he does by depriving us of those Things to which we are so violently attached and in the Enjoyment of which we place all our Delight. He looks upon us as dangerously

sick of a spiritual Dislemper, into which an uninterrupted State of Prosperity is but too apt to sling us. I mean a Forgetfulness of our Duty to him, and a Neglect of that serious Care we ought to have of our Soul, and its future well-being. Like a prudent and skilful Physician, not consulting what may be agreeable, but what may be profitable, he makes Use of those Remedies which are most likely to effect a Cure, by putting us upon having Recourse to him, who best knows our Distemper, and what may be proper for our Recovery.

This we may in great Part learn from the Example of the *Jewish* Ruler in the Gospel, and his going to Christ to obtain a Cure for his Son. It is not to be doubted that he had a paternal Affection for his Child, which made him apprehensive of his Danger; and the Fear of losing him was a sad Interruption to that Pleasure and Satisfaction he had, till then, lived in. Great as he was, and abounding in worldly Comforts, he never thought of going to Jesus; but the sad State of his dying Son made him reflect and have Recourse to our Blessed Lord; and tho' at first he thought of no more than saving his Child's temporal Life, it proved the happy Occasion of gaining spiritual Life to himself and all his Family, by believing in Jesus Christ. Here we may behold the wonderful Oeconomy of God's Providence. Our Saviour had been before this in *Cana of Galilee*; he had preached his divine Doctrine in *Capharnaum*, and had wrought divers wonderful and illustrious Miracles,

Miracles, but few or none, especially of the Rich and Great Ones, believed in him. His Fame had spread itself about, and probably had come to the Ears of this Ruler who then did not much regard it. But finding himself sensibly touched in the Person of his Son, he thinks of Jesus, and of what he had heard, and immediately resolves to have Recourse to him.

God oftentimes makes himself known by the Ministers of his Word. We daily hear of him, and of what belongs to our eternal Salvation ; but buried as we are in the deep Sleep of a worldly Life, altogether wrapt up in the Enjoyments of it we little regard what is said to us, till some unlooked for Misfortune, some unforeseen Accident, awakes us, makes us open our Eyes, and we begin to think of having Recourse to him. The Method indeed of God's visiting us, and the Manner in which he calls upon us, are various, and according to what he in his infinite Wisdom thinks proper and most convenient for us. Some there are who may drink deeper of this bitter Cup than others. Some there are whose Trials are more severe and fall on a more sensible Part ; yet his wise Design is the same in all, to rouse us from a lethargick Forgetfulness, from a State of Insensibility, to think with ourselves, not only for the present, but for the future. Whatever Means he may Use for this End, it is an Effect of his Goodness, and however disagreeable to our corrupt Nature will be of infinite Advantage to us, if we are not wanting to our-

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selves, and render these his Mercies useless to us. I call them Mercies, and such they certainly are. If we do not find them so, it is our own Fault, either in not going to Jesus in Time of affliction, or not going to him as we ought and with proper Dispositions.

As the Design of God in the various Misfortunes he permits to happen to us, is, as I said, to draw us to himself, at those Times we are to seek Comfort and Help from him. This excludes all murmuring or complaining; all giving Way to sullen and fretful Uneasiness, which instead of affording any Relief, makes the Sore worse, and the Affliction to lie heavier on the Spirits. In vain do we seek to find any Benefit by the Ways which the World prescribes in such Cases, by endeavouring to lose a Sense of Misfortunes by sinful Diversions, and idle vain Amusements. The Christian's Duty is to look upon all the troublesome Accidents of Life, all the Strokes of adverse Fortune as so many kind Monitors who inform him that Jesus is come down from *Judea* into *Galilee*, and advise to go to him, first by Reflection on his past Life, to see if any noted Irregularity, or particular Sin, may not have been the Cause of the present Affliction. If so, humbly to submit to it, in a true penitential Spirit, as a fatherly Chastisement, and seriously resolve to amend. If upon Reflection nothing of this appears, to consider that it is the holy Will of God he should bear this Cross, and humbly to adore and submit to his holy Will; and
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from him to expect Succour and Relief in his good Time, and when he shall please to grant it, without being uneasy if not delivered or relieved immediately, or as soon as ever we desire it; for we must leave both the Manner how, and the Time when to God, who knows what is best for us. If with these Dispositions we have Recourse to him in our Troubles, we need not doubt but we shall find the Relief we humbly ask, and till that is granted, the Assistance of his Grace to bear our Sufferings with Patience, and by which they will be sanctified to us, and turn to our greater spiritual Advantage, and we shall experience the Truth of what St. Paul says: *That which is at present momentary and light of our Tribulations, worketh for us above Measure an eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. And it is by many Tribulations, by the Way of the Cross, that we must enter into the Kingdom of God.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

My God, my God, how good and bountiful art thou? Thy Ears are always open to hear our Prayers; and thou art always ready to grant our Petitions. Thou dost even exceed oftentimes our Desires and Deserts in the Favours and Graces thou bestowest upon us. Thou art the inexhaustible Fountain of all Good, and in thee we find assured Relief, and a certain Deliverance from all Dangers. Thou art our Health and Strength. Thou art our Physician and our Life. In thee we live, and without thee we die.

O sovereign Bliss, and only true Happiness of my Soul! to whom should I have Recourse in all my Wants and Necessities but to thee. Thou art he who alone can help me, and thou art always willing to relieve me. To thee, O my Lord and my Saviour! I presume to come, and with all Humility and Confidence in thy Goodness intreat thee in Behalf of my poor Soul, which is dangerously sick by Sin, and brought to the Point of Death. It is, alas! very weak by evil Habits, and vicious Passions; but, do thou say the Word, and I shall be cured. Command only, and I shall be healed. O speak those comfortable Words, thy Sins are forgiven thee. Then I shall recover my Health again, and will praise and glorify thy holy Name.

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If Troubles and Misfortunes may be necessary to bring me to thee my Jesus, I am content to suffer them. I will bow down and adore the merciful Dispensations of thy loving Kindness, and will patiently submit to what thou appointest. To thee I can, and to thee I will have Recourse. Draw off, dear Lord, my Affections from the World, and bring me to thee, that in thee I may find Health, Strength and all that is good for my Soul, and make me, one Day, happy with thee for ever.

Twenty-first *SUNDAY* after *Pentecost*.

The G O S P E L, St. *Matt.* xviii. 23.

THE Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a King, who would call his Servants to an Account. 24. And when he had begun to take the Account, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand Talents. 25. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his Lord commanded that he should be sold, and his Wife and Children, and all that he had, and Payment to be made. 26. But that Servant falling down, besought him, saying : Have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27. And the Lord of that Servant being moved with Pity, let him go, and forgave him the Debt. 28. But when that Servant was gone out, he found one of his Fellow-Servants who owed

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owed him an hundred Pence : And laying Hold of him, he took him by the Throat, saying : Pay what thou owest. 29. And his Fellow-Servant falling down, besought him, saying : Have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30. And he would not : but went and cast him into Prison till he paid the Debt. 31. Now his Fellow-Servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their Lord all that was done. 32. Then his Lord called him, and said to him : Thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all the Debt, because thou besoughtest me : Shouldst thou not then have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Compassion on thee ? 33. And his Lord being angry, delivered him to the Tortures, until he paid all the Debt. 34. So shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his Brother from your Hearts.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

The significant Parable in this Day's Gospel is a lively Representation of the Mercy and Bounty of God to Sinners, and affords Matter of great Comfort and Consolation, but at the same Time may justly strike us with Fear and Apprehension lest we abuse that Mercy and Bounty. A certain King calling his Servants to an Account, found one who owed him ten thousand Talents. A very great Sum. The poor Wretch not having wherewith to pay,

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was ordered to be sold with his Wife and Children and all that he had ; but falling at his Lord's Feet, he begged that he would have a little Patience, and he would pay him. This moved his Lord to Compassion, who generously forgave him the whole Debt and dismissed him. What a moving Scene is here presented to our View ! Can we hear and reflect on it, and not find in ourselves the strongest Emotions of Pity and Compassion for the poor Servant ? Having nothing to pay, he heard the terrible Sentence condemning him to be sold with his Wife and Children for Slaves. He had no other Remedy but the Bounty of his injured Master. He falls at his Feet, and begs for a little Patience. It is natural to suppose the Severity of his Sentence made him tremble, and added Tears to his Prayers. He obtained his Request, and more than he asked for. He only begged for a little Time, and his kind benevolent Prince forgave him all the Debt. Admirable Representation of the Bounty of God, his indulgent Mercy to penitent Sinners. This great and absolute Lord of Heaven and Earth beholding a penitent Sinner at his Feet has Regard to his Sighs and Tears, grants his Petition, and sends him away with his Sins pardoned, forgiving the Debt he had contracted. In considering which we may cry out with the Royal Psalmist : *The Mercy of the Lord is above all his Works*, Psal. 144. Sinners are those careless and negligent Servants who are indebted to their Lord ten thousand

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land Talents, and when called upon to give an Account have nothing to pay. Divine Justice sentences them to be sold, and Payment to be made; and orders them to be cast into that Prison from whence they shall not be released till they have paid the last Farthing. Alas! what can a poor Sinner do, reduced to this sad Condition? This only he has to do: He may fling himself at his Lord's Feet and implore Mercy; and his merciful Lord will graciously forgive him.

Nothing can give us a greater, or more exalted Idea of the infinite Mercy and Patience of God towards Sinners than to consider how graciously he bears with, how tenderly he calls upon, and with what long sufferings he waits for their Repentance and Amendment. Let us represent to ourselves that vast Multitude of Men who live upon the Earth, and defile it by their Sins: Let us consider the many and enormous Crimes they daily commit. Could we draw a true Picture of the universal Corruption of Mankind, and discover that Torrent of Iniquity which overflows the World. Should God communicate to us a small Ray of that divine Knowledge by which he knows what is in the Hearts of Men, and penetrates the inmost Recesses of their sinful Thoughts, that by the Favour of this Light we might discover those horrid Monsters of Sin proceeding from the corrupt Heart of Man; what a Prospect should we then behold? How admirable would the Patience of God appear, which so long, for so many

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many Ages has received so many Outrages and Insults from those Creatures he has made, and whom he made to serve and glorify him? How boundless is his Patience! How great his Mercy with which he not only bears with Sinners, but continually calls and invites them to Repentance, offering them Pardon and Forgiveness of all their Sins! This Consideration may make us cry out with the Prophet *Jeremy: Misericordia Domini quia non sumus consumpti*, Lam. iii. *It is owing to the Mercy of the Lord, that we are not consumed in the Flames of his Justice.* To this general Reflection we may add some particular Considerations, and by them be further assisted to understand the Patience and long Suffering of God. It is not with Sinners in general that he bears, it is not in general only that he calls upon such to repent, but he extends this Bounty to every one in particular. This Bounty, this Patience has God exhibited to every one of us from the Time when we first came to the Use of Reason, and became, alas! capable of offending him till this present Moment. During this Series of Time, this Number of Years, how often has he invited us to return to him? How many favourable Opportunities has he given us of being reconciled to him? How many admirable Helps has he afforded us to assist us in our Conversion? Where is that particular Sinner whom he has not often called upon by the Ministers of his Word; by the Checks of his own Conscience; sometimes endeavouring to move him

him by Threats, or to frighten him by the terrible Examples of his Justice upon others; more often sweetly alluring him by the engaging Promises of Mercy, and even intreating him with all the Affection of a tender Parent? Many Times has a Sinner been on the Point of falling a Sacrifice to his Justice, but Mercy intervened, and obtained for him a little more Time. Divine Justice has often condemned the Sinner, and Divine Mercy has often stopped the Execution. Let all this bear Witness of that Patience God has with Sinners, and of that Bounty and Goodness he is always willing and ready to shew to them.

As we must by this be made sensible of God's Bounty and Goodness, so we must endeavour to make a right Use of this Mercy, and not abuse it. God is our great Master, and he will, one Day, call us all to Account; is it not to be feared, that we have too much Reason to apprehend we shall then be found greatly indebted to him? If upon our humble Petition he generously forgives us our past Debts, in the Sacrament of Penance when we fall at our Lord's Feet in the Persons of his Ministers, let us take Care not wilfully to run again into Arrears, or contract new Debts. This is a Point of Importance, and wherein is to be feared, many fail. We see Numbers, in the Confessional, falling at their great Master's Feet, begging Pardon and promising Amendment. But do all these really endeavour to amend? Are there not too many
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who soon get the Favour they have received and think no more of their promises. This may justly strike us with Fear and Apprehension, lest we unhappily abuse his Mercy. Let us consider that such a Conduct is highly ungrateful and provoking to God, and may move him to reverse the Favour he has granted, and exact from us a Payment of the whole Debt. Having reconciled ourselves to him we must shew the Sense we have of his Goodness by careful Endeavours to correct past Faults, keep our good Purposes, and amend our Lives, the Use he justly expects we should make of that Mercy he has shewn us. One Instance of this our Blessed Lord here exemplifies in that Mercy we ought to shew to our Neighbour; that receiving Mercy from God, we may likewise ourselves shew it to one another. This is an Inference our Saviour himself draws from the significant Parable here delivered, and assures us, that in vain we expect to find Mercy from the Hands of God, if we refuse it to our Neighbours, and has expressly told us, that unless we do forgive, we shall not be forgiven. Nothing need to be further urged to enforce this. This is sufficient, and if this will not prevail, we shall deservedly suffer the Consequences of our uncharitable and unchristian Severity to others. As this is one great Part of the Moral of this Day's Gospel, and of great Importance to us, it deserves our serious Attention, that we may make a right Use of the Instructions here given to us, according to the Advice

vice of St. *James*. *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving yourselves,* St. *Jac. i.* And our Saviour says: *Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it,* St. *Luke xi.*

A S P I R A T I O N S.

O my God, my offended Maker, and my sovereign Lord! have Mercy on me. I prostrate myself at thy Feet, and with all Humility beg thou wouldst have a little further Patience with me. I confess, O my Lord, that I am greatly in Debt to thy Justice, but have Patience, and I will endeavour to pay thee. I will sincerely labour, thy Grace assisting me, and endeavour to make some Satisfaction for my past Faults, and will serve thee more faithfully for the future. Have Compassion on me, and forgive the Debt I owe to thee. Dismiss me in Peace, and say to my Soul; *Thy Sins are forgiven thee.* I confess, O God, I have nothing to pay the Debt I owe, and have Reason to apprehend the Rigour of thy Justice, according to what I have deserved; but thou art merciful. Thy Mercy is above all thy Works, and thou dost delight to shew Mercy to the Sons of Men. I will hope then to receive that Pardon I now humbly ask; I will make a Right of thy Mercy, and never wilfully offend thee more.

O Jesus, my adorable Master, while I thus implore thy Mercy, let me remember that thou
hast

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hast promised to deal with me, as I deal with my Neighbour. Thou hast commanded me to love him, and forgive him as often as he shall offend me. I give thee Thanks for this holy and just Command. For the Love of thee I do sincerely and from my Heart forgive all those who have any Ways injured me. Root out of my Heart all Anger, Hatred and Malice, that I may live and die in Charity with all Men. Forgive, dear Lord, all those who have done me any Wrong; and pardon my Offences as I forgive those who have injured me. O that this Spirit of Love may abound in our Hearts, that we may ardently love thee, and cordially love one another! Sweet Jesus, thou camest from Heaven, to bring this holy Fire upon Earth, and desirest that it should burn and flame. Enkindle it, dear Lord, in my Breast, and there let it sweetly burn, till I am totally consumed in Love; that I may love thee above all Things, and my Neighbour truly as myself.

Twenty-second *SUNDAY* after
Pentecost.

The G O S P E L, St. *Matt.* xxii. 15.

THEN the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare him in his Speech. 16. And they send to him their Disciples with the *Herodians*, saying : Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the Way of God in Truth, neither carest thou for any Man. For thou dost not regard the Persons of Men. 17. Tell us therefore what dost thou think, is it lawful to give Tribute to *Cæsar*, or not ? 18. But Jesus knowing their Wickedness, said : Why do you tempt me, ye Hypocrites ? 19. Shew me a Piece of Tribute-Money. And they offered to him a Penny. 20. And Jesus saith to them : Whose Image and Inscription is this ? 21. They say
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to him *Cæsar's*. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to *Cæsar* the Things that are *Cæsar's*: And to God the Things that are God's.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

Many are the excellent and useful Instructions which are given to us in that Portion of Scripture which the Church reads to her Children for the Gospel of this *Sunday*. The practical Lessons therein given afford useful Matter for our serious Reflection. We may first consider what the Pharisees said to Jesus Christ: *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the Way of God in Truth, neither carest thou for any Man. For thou dost not regard the Persons of Men.* This was a just Character they gave our Blessed Saviour, whose holy Life was so perfectly innocent, his Conduct so regular, just and uniform, and his divine Doctrine delivered by him in such a Manner, as by all their Cunning and Craft, their constant Watching and Endeavours to ensnare him in his Discourse, they could not find the least Pretence to accuse him justly of any Crime, or find the least Shadow of a Fault in him. Excellent Instruction for his Disciples and Followers, and such in Quality of Christians, we profess ourselves to be, and such we ought to shew ourselves in our Manners and Behaviour. We ought to copy after this perfect Example our Lord has given us, that thereby we may
make

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make good the sacred Character we bear. The Glory of God, and the Good of others should be the End of all our Actions. This particularly regards those whom God has called to the sacred Ministry, who must teach and preach the Word of God in all Truth with this pure Intention, without human Regard to any one, or Respect of Persons, not seeking to please Men, but God; so to fulfil the Work of their Ministry as to be approved by God. Every one likewise who desires to shew himself a true Christian must be a sincere Lover of Truth, and must regulate his Life by the Rules of the Gospel, without Regard to what the World may say, and without Respect to the Person of any one; so that no human Regard, or Fear of displeasing, or desire to please and gain the Favour of any one, how great and powerful soever he may be, must have any Influence over us to make us depart from the Ways of Truth and Equity, nor induce us to commit Sin, and act against our Conscience. We must not be ashamed of our holy Faith, nor of the Practice of Virtue, but boldly, on Occasions, declare for it, and abhor Vice in all its Forms and Shapes. The Christian must be mindful of what his Divine Master has said: *Every one who shall confess me before Men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in Heaven. But he who shall deny me before Men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven,* St. Matt. x. These Words are to be understood not only of confessing or denying
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our holy Religion, but also of the Practice of or living up to it. Nor will it avail us to profess the true christian Catholic Faith with our Mouths, if we contradict it in our Actions by living contrary to the Precepts of it. Jesus Christ has also told us not to fear Men, who can only, if we displease them, hurt the Body, but to *fear him who can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, St. Luke xii. This is one useful Lesson we are taught in one Day's holy Gospel, and naturally leads us to another subsequent to this, and to consider in the second Place the Meaning and Purport of that Question our Blessed Saviour put to the Pharisees shewing him a Piece of Tribute-Money. *Whose Image and Inscription is this?*

The Disciples of the Pharisees asked Jesus Christ, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, or not. The Pharisees, and the Generality of the *Jews*, held it unlawful, as being a Usurpation on their Liberty. The *Herodians*, who were a Sect in the Interest of King *Herod*, maintained it to be lawful. The Pharisees thought to ensnare Christ in whatever Answer he should give. Had he replied it was lawful to pay Tribute, they thought they should have a fair Occasion to traduce him among the People as an Enemy to their Liberties and Properties. If he had answered it was not lawful, they designed, upon the Testimony of the *Herodians*, to have impeached him as an Enemy to the State, and an Ill-wisher to the Government. This was their Plot against the holy Jesus.

Jesus. An artful and cunning Design. But *there is no Wisdom or counsel against the Lord*, Prov. vi. Our Blessed Saviour with admirable Prudence and Wisdom baffled their impious Design, and covered them with Shame and Confusion. He did not give them an Answer but looking upon a Piece of Tribute-Money asked them, whose Image and Inscription it bore. They told him *Cæsar's*, and by their Reply tacitly owned that Tribute was due to *Cæsar*.

The Question which our Saviour put to the Pharisees, we ought, Christians! every one to put to ourselves. Let us look upon ourselves, and ask: *Whose Image is this?* We must own it is God's, and bears his Inscription: It belongs neither to *Cæsar*, the World, or any other Master. God has created us after his own Likeness. He has stamped his own Image upon us, in a living and immortal Soul. We read his Inscription in fair and legible Characters of the three Powers of our Soul, *Memory*, *Will* and *Understanding*. To him we belong, and to no other. Hence we ought to be careful to preserve this Image fair, and not deform it by Sin. We belong to God, and must not give ourselves as a Tribute to the Service of his Enemies, the World, the Flesh and the Devil. In order the better to understand this important Truth, let us consider every Part of this Inscription, which evidently points out to us to whom we belong. God has given us a *Memory*, that noble Faculty whereby we are enabled

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enabled to think on him our great Creator, to remember what he has done for us, and the Returns we are to make to him. By the Help of this Faculty we retain what we hear, and what we are taught; and therefore has God bestowed this Faculty upon us, that we might never forget the great and noble End for which he made us. That we might remember and have always in Mind our entire Dependance on him, that we are not of ourselves, and that whatever we have, it is from him we have it, who alone made us, and the Work of whose Hands we are. This is so clear and evident, that we cannot make Use of this our Memory, but it puts us in Mind whose Image we bear, and whose the Inscription is that is stamped upon it.

Another Part of which Inscription is our *Understanding*, by which we are enabled to know and comprehend what we read, or hear of our Duty to God. It is this Faculty that particularly constitutes what we are, rational Creatures, and distinguishes us from brute Beasts. By this we reflect, reason, draw just Inferences and conclude. This we do right, and as we ought, when, knowing whose we are, and for what End we were made, we conclude that it is our Duty to answer that End, and that to deviate from it must be to invert and change the Order of our Being. By this Faculty we are enabled to comprehend the great Duties of a christian Life, we know how to regulate our Actions to a right End. By this we know how to decline from Evil, and
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to follow Good, and are able to discern the Difference between one and the other, the Difference between Things temporal and eternal ; how much more preferable the Things of the next World are to those of this, wherein we may clearly see where our best and greatest Interest is concerned. All these Acts of the Understanding which we are endowed with clearly demonstrate whose Image we bear. The Characters of this Inscription are too plain and clear not to be read ; nor can we read them, and not immediately know whose we are, and to whom belong.

This is equally true as to our *Will*, or third Power of the Soul, and wherein the Divine Image of God appears. He has given us this Power, whereby we are able to determine our Choice, and make an Option of the different Objects presented to us. The Excellency of this Faculty appears in this, that thereby it depends, in a great Measure, on ourselves to be happy, and that no Man is miserable by Compulsion, or of Necessity ; but because he makes a wrong Use of his Will, and foolishly bends it to what is hurtful to him. It must be owned a very great and peculiar Privilege thus to be able to chuse for ourselves. This Privilege we enjoy, and thereby partake, in some Degree, of the Divine Perfections. God indeed is altogether of himself, independent, perfect in the utmost and every Degree of Perfection : What we enjoy is from him, the Effect of his Bounty to us, and his free Gift.

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These Gifts are so many Letters of the Inscription he has written upon that Image we bear of him. The Consequence of which is, that thus belonging to God, the World, no Creature, or any one else but God has any Right or Title to us. If therefore as our Blessed Lord says in this Gospel, we are to give unto God the Things which are God's. Let us readily do it by dedicating ourselves entirely to his Service in the exact Observance of his holy Law. Let all the Powers of our Soul be employed to serve and glorify him. Our *Memory* be employed in thinking of him. Our *Understanding* in learning and knowing our Duty to him, and our *Will* in loving him. As he made us for himself and to serve him, it is in his Service every Christian must employ himself, according to that Station wherein God has placed him. This is to render to God the Things that are God's ; for which he will render to us the glorious Recompence of eternal Bliss ; and having served him faithfully in this World, we shall be happy with him for ever in the next.

ASPIRATIONS.

O Jesus, the bright Mirrour of Purity and Innocence ! Thou sacred Author and Teacher of all Truth ! Teach me the Way of Truth, that I may serve thee with Sincerity, an upright Mind, and pure Intention. Confirm and strengthen me by thy holy Grace, that I may not fear any Thing in this World ; but without regarding what others may say of me, pursue a steady Course of Virtue and the Love of thee. O that I might be so careful and diligent in thy Service as no Fault might be found in me. When, dearest Lord, shall I be so happy as to please thee in all Things ; and do every Thing for the Love of thee.

My God, and my All ! I am thine, and thou only hast a Right to me. Thou hast made me after thy own Likeness. Thou hast stamped thy glorious Image upon me. Thou hast given me those noble Faculties of *Memory*, *Will* and *Understanding*. It is here, O Lord, in this fair Inscription I read to whom I belong. Thou hast given me a *Memory* to think of thee, an *Understanding* to know thee, and a *Will* to love thee. May I never think of any Thing but thee. Mayest thou be the only Subject of my Thoughts ; the constant daily Object of my Wishes and Desires. May I desire to know nothing but thee, my God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. May I love thee, and thee only, O Beauty always

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ancient, and always new, the only worthy Object of Love. May I love thee with all my Heart, with all my Mind, and with all my Strength. May I love thee above all other Things; and all other Things only in thee and for thee. Thus, O my God! may I render to thee what is thine. Having received All I have from thee, I thus give all I have to thee. O may I inseparably adhere to thee, and live only and alone to thee and for thee, till I come happily for ever in Heaven, to enjoy and possess thee.

Twenty-third *SUNDAY* after
Pentecost.

The GOSPEL, St. *Matt.* ix. 18.

AN D as he was speaking these Things unto them, behold a certain Ruler came to him, and adored him, saying: Lord, my Daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy Hand upon her, and she shall live. 19. And Jesus rising up followed him, with his Disciples. 20. And behold a Woman who was troubled with an Issue of Blood twelve Years came behind him, and touched the Hem of his Garment. 21. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his Garment, I shall be healed. 22. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good Heart, Daughter, thy Faith has made thee whole. And the Woman was made whole from that Hour. 23. And

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when Jesus was come into the House of the Ruler, and saw the Minstrels and the Multitude making a Rout. 24. He said : Give Place, for the Girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to Scorn. 25. And when the Multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the Hand. And the Maid arose. 26. And the Fame hereof went Abroad into all that Country.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

In the Gospel of this *Sunday* we read of two Miracles wrought by the Saviour of the World, both equally wonderful and instructive. Our Blessed Lord was desired by a Ruler of the Synagogue to go down to his House to heal his Daughter who lay at the Point of Death. Christ complied with his Desire, and when he came to the House found the Girl dead ; but taking her by the Hand restored her to Life again. As he was going to the Ruler's House, a Woman who had been troubled twelve Years with a bloody Flux, touched his Garment, and was made whole. This poor Woman, as the Evangelist St. *Luke* informs us, had spent all her Substance upon Physicians, but could get no Cure. In this sad Condition she had Recourse to Jesus Christ. Her Faith prompted, and told her, that if she could but touch the Hem of his Garment, she should be healed. Coming behind and touching him, she immediately received that Benefit

fit she had so long in vain sought for. Excellent and instructive Representation of those who seek their Happiness and Comfort in this World, which, like an ignorant Quack, after all their Attendance, and consuming all they have, leaves them no better, but in a worse Condition. It is in God only and in his holy Service we can find true Happiness and Comfort, which, in vain we seek for in the World, or the Enjoyments of it. Hence it will be a useful Reflection on the Gospel of this *Sunday* to consider the Emptiness and Nothing of this World, how incapable it is to render us happy, or to free us from the Miseries which through the Corruption of our Nature we are subject to. And that it is only in God we find true Comfort; that his Service will render us truly happy even in this World, and abundantly more so in the next.

That we are subject to many Miseries in this World is too clear and evident to be called in Question. Daily Experience sufficiently convinces us of it: And it is equally a general Complaint, as well as Acknowledgment. Every one is ready to say with holy *Job*: *Man born of a Woman, living a short Time, is replenished with many Miseries*, Job. xiv. The sad Effect of the Corruption of our Nature. Unhappy Consequence of lost Innocence, and the Sin of our Proto-Parent *Adam*. These Miseries are so many, and of such various Kinds, that to enumerate them all would be a very difficult Task: And though to some it

may seem otherwise, as they are exempted from them by the Pleasure, Abundance and Satisfaction they live in; yet upon a stricter and nearer Search, it will appear but a Cheat put upon them by the World, whereby not only others, but themselves are deceived. Nor is it the least Misfortune of this World, that we are too apt to be blind to them, and do not so easily discover, or care not to own them. Let us pass over the corporal Miseries to which we are all subject, and under which many, very many labour, and are sadly afflicted with, as Sickness and Distempers, Poverty and Indigence, and consider at present the much greater Troubles and Afflictions of the Mind, arising from our inordinate Passions, which in vain we seek to satisfy, or to make ourselves happy in the Possession of what, carried on by them, we eagerly and inordinately seek. The Passions of Man being of that ungovernable Nature as not to be easily satisfied. The more they are indulged, the more they crave; still wanting, and still aspiring. Experience proves the Truth of this, and let us examine those who have it most in their Power to gratify themselves, and they will own, if they confess the Truth, that new Desires daily succeeding, bring one Labour after another, which, with the many Disappointments so frequently met with, renders them constantly uneasy, ever in Anxiety, in which State the Mind finds no solid and lasting Comfort and Content, and where this is wanting it is a false Happiness, which such can pretend

pretend to enjoy. A precarious Happiness, easily overturned by a thousand Accidents to which every one is liable, and from which none are exempted.

Who is there that says he is rich enough ; and who does not desire more ? How few are there who are content with what they have ? Those who have but little, think they should be happy if they had a little more. To gain this their Thoughts are at Work Day and Night : their Time is totally employed in laborious Endeavours for that End, and when obtained the craving Passion still shews itself and then desires Abundance, nor is it at a Loss to find specious Pretences to continue its anxious Care and Sollicitude to procure it. Those who have Abundance, are willing to increase it, that they may have it more in their Power to satisfy those Desires and Passions to which they give Way. If Honour or Pleasure are the darling Objects of our Wishes, how seldom are any Bounds fixed ? An ordinary Degree of one, or a moderate Share of the other will not satisfy a Mind thus bent. That Pride which stirs us up and makes us ambitiously seek to rise, eggs us on to aim yet higher and higher, without putting any Stop to this progressive Passion. The Pleasures we have indulged ourselves in, as they pall and dwindle away in the Enjoyment, the Mind is continually at Work to find out new and fresh Enjoyments, which, like the old ones, soon grow dissatisfactory : The Want remains still to be supplied, and

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this causes new Trouble and Uneasiness to find out some further, or such satisfying Object. When all this is duly considered, and seriously pondered on, how little will there appear in it that can afford true Comfort and real Happiness ! In vain we seek it in the Enjoyments of the World. It will be Labour lost to seek for true Happiness in any Thing but in the Service of God.

That the Service of God is what will afford us true and solid Comfort, and render us truly happy, may be sufficiently and undeniably proved from the Nature of those excellent and holy Precepts which he gives us, as they tend to calm and quiet those tumultuous Passions and inordinate Inclinations which are the Source of all our Troubles and Miseries. By observing these Precepts and taking his holy Law for our Guide, we are enabled to overcome our Passions, at least so far as to keep them under and in Subjection, so as not to be Slaves to them, nor to be carried away by them. What may be wanting to this from our Weakness and Insufficiency will be supplied by the powerful Assistance of his Grace, which he is always ready to bestow, and for the obtaining of which he has appointed those excellent and certain Helps, Prayer and the holy Sacraments. The Humility of the Gospel, which, as Christians, we make Profession of, is a sovereign Remedy against Pride so detrimental to that Quiet and Happiness we would enjoy. Poverty of Spirit, inculcated by Jesus Christ in
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his Divine Discourses, and taught by his holy Apostles, as it puts Bounds to our Desires of the Things of this World, so it makes us content with the Station we are in, and frees us from all that anxious Care and Sollicitude which is the Consequence of an avaricious Temper, and a greedy Thirst after Gain and Profit. It preserves us from all the dangerous Occasions to which the Love of Riches exposes us, and a Competency of Food and Rayment affords that true Happiness, that Content and Peace of Mind which all the Wealth in the Universe cannot afford, nor Purchase for us. Thus the Service of God is much more advantageous, and more conducing to Comfort and Happiness even in this Life, than the Service of the World, or being Slaves to our irregular and inordinate Passions: And will effectually secure to us eternal Happiness in the next. Christians! let these serious Truths make a due Impression on your Minds, and have a proper Influence on your Conduct. Resolve by a Life of Virtue and Piety to secure to yourselves a lasting Happiness both here and hereafter. If hitherto you have foolishly consumed your Substance and spent all your Time in following the World, now at least abandon it as a meer Quack and empty Cheat, and go to Jesus to love and serve him only. A happy Experience will soon shew and convince you of the Difference. In the Service of God you will always find true and solid Comfort, a Remedy for all your Evils, Help in all your Distress,
Ease

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Ease in all your Pains, Security against the Fear of Death and a well-grounded Hope of eternal Felicity in the Kingdom of Heaven.

A S P I R A T I O N S.

To whom should I have Recourse but to thee, O thou endless Source and inexhaustible Fountain of all Good? Where shall I seek for Comfort and Happiness but in thee my God, and in thy holy Service? Alas! I have too long foolishly sought for it in the World, and in Creatures. I have long laboured under a Flux of unruly and ungovernable Passions, irregular and inordinate Inclinations. I have consumed and spent all my Time in seeking trifling, and alas! sinful Satisfaction. I have lived but too long to the World, or rather have been long dead and buried in its idle Fooleries. It is Time that I should rise from this deadly Sleep, from that unhappy Lethargy which has hitherto made me so forgetful of thee and so insensible to all the Charms of thy Goodness.

O Beauty always ancient, and yet always new! let me now, though late, return to thee. I will arise, and will go to thee, O Jesus, thou only and true Physician of Souls. If I can but touch the Hem of thy Garment I shall be made whole. Take me by the Hand, dear Lord, and raise me, that I may henceforth live to thee, and to thee alone. O may I now begin to love thee. Charm my Heart. Charm all the Powers of my Soul, for thou art that Beauty,

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Beauty, that Goodness, that Perfection which alone deserves to be loved. May I from this Moment inseparably adhere to thee. May no Creature, neither Life nor Death ever divide, or separate me from thee. May I be united to thee here by Love, and hereafter be happy in the Enjoyment of thee for ever. Amen, so be it, O my God and my All.

Twenty-fourth *SUNDAY* after
Pentecost.

The GOSPEL, St *Matt.* xxiv. 15.

WHEN therefore you shall see *the Abomination of Desolation*, which was spoken of by *Daniel* the Prophet, standing in the holy Place (he that readeth, let him understand.) 16. Then they that are in *Judea*, let them fly to the Mountains. 17. And he that is on the House Top, let him not come down to take any Thing out of his House. 18. And he that is in the Field, let him not go back to take his Coat. 19. And Woe to them that are with Child, and that gave Suck in those Days. 20. But pray that your Flight be not in the Winter, or on the Sabbath. 21. For there shall be great Tribulation, such as hath not been from the Beginning of the World until

til now, neither shall be. 22. And unless those Days had been shortened, no Flesh should be saved: But for the Sake of the Elect those Days shall be shortened. 23. Then if any Man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there; do not believe him. 24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders, inso-much as to deceive (if possible) even the Elect. 25. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. 26. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the Desart; go ye not out: Behold *he* is in the Closets, believe it not. 27. For as Lightning cometh out of the East, and appeareth even into the West, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. 28. Wheresoever the Body shall be, thither shall the Eagles be gathered together. 29. And immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, the Sun shall be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of Heaven shall be moved. 30. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: And then shall all Tribes of the Earth mourn: And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with much Power and Majesty. 31. And he shall send his Angels with a Trumpet, and a great Voice: And they shall gather his Elect from the four Winds, from the farthest Part of the Heavens to the utmost Bounds of them. 32. And from the Fig-tree learn a Parable: When the Branch thereof is now tender,

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der, and the Leaves come forth, you know that Summer is nigh. 33. So you also, when you shall see all these Things, know ye that it is nigh, *even* at the Doors. 34. Amen, I say to you, that this Generation shall not pass, till all these Things be done. 35. Heaven and Earth shall pass, but my Words shall not pass.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

In this Gospel Christ foretells the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and in a very moving Manner describes the dismal Condition of the *Jews*, at that Time reduced by their Enemies to the last Extremity of Misery. All these Predictions of our Blessed Saviour were exactly fulfilled in the last Siege of *Jerusalem*, under *Titus*, Son of *Vespasian*, the Roman Emperor. Then was seen the Abomination spoken of by the Prophet *Daniel*, when the Holy of Holies, the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or interior Part of the Temple polluted and defiled; when the Temple was destroyed; the City laid waste, and that obstinate and wicked People carried into Slavery, and dispersed into all Parts of the World, wherein they have been miserably wandering, as a Vagabond Race, ever since. A lasting Monument of God's severe, but just Judgments upon them, for their long Impiety and Wickedness. They had been the favourite Nation of God, and by him honoured with many special Graces and Blessings above all other

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other Nations of the Earth. God had chosen them to be his People, had declared them such, and that he was their Lord and their God; and yet at length was moved to treat them with the utmost Severity. If we enquire into the Cause of this rigorous Proceeding we shall find it to have been their wilful and continual Disobedience to him. They had shewed themselves on all Occasions a stiff-necked and perverse Generation, whom no Benefits could work upon. They had rejected from Time to Time, ill-treated, and murdered his holy Prophets, he had sent to them: And, to compleat the Measure of their Iniquity, when in the last Place he sent his only Son Jesus Christ among them, him they rejected, scorned and despised, treated with the utmost Indignity and Barbarity, and put him to a most cruel and ignominious Death. They had impiously desired that his Blood might fall upon them, and their Children, and soon felt the dreadful Effects of their horrid Imprecation, in the terrible Judgments of God, which, in a few Years after our Saviour's Crucifixion, overtook them. When we read of this Destruction of the *Jews*, we may behold a dreadful, but instructive Instance of Divine Justice upon an obstinate and wicked Race of People, which ought to fill us with Fear and Apprehension, as theirs has likewise been the Case, since of many Christian Kingdoms and States in the East; the mournful Lot of many, once flourishing Churches, whose Candlesticks have been removed

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moved and Light extinguished, by the terrible but just Judgments of God in Punishment of their Sins. This Conduct which the Justice of God observes with Respect to Nations and Kingdoms it observes also with Regard to particular Persons, to wilful and obstinate Sinners, who, despising his Mercy and long Suffering; slighting his Calls to Repentance and Amendment, continue in their sinful Ways, and transgressing his holy Commandments. To all such he foretells the future Destruction that will come upon them, and the Calamities they shall be involved in. It is now a Time of Mercy which Sinners are sweetly invited to lay Hold of: But there will come a Time of Justice, when his Wrath will speak in Thunder, and obstinate penitent Sinners suffer what their Wickedness deserves. *O that Men were wise,* says holy Moses, *that they would provide for their latter End!* Deut. xxxii. Christians! let us be truly wise, and do so, then shall we be safe, and free from Danger, when the Day of the Lord, that dreadful bitter Day, shall come.

This dreadful Day, the great Tribulation here mentioned will then overtake all such Sinners, when they are about to quit this World, and at the Hour of their Death, when they shall be summoned to a rigorous particular Judgment, and to give an Account of themselves: And when their eternal Lot will be decided. In the Hour of Death how will the Body be tormented with a dreadful Agony at

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its approaching Dissolution ! But the Soul how much more from the Reproaches of a guilty Conscience, and when it will have a much more clear Knowledge of Good and Evil, and find the Burthen of Sin truly heavy and insupportable ! An unfortunate Sinner, who in his Life-time resisted the Calls and Inspirations of God ; was wilfully deaf to the frequent Exhortations that were given to him, and refused to repent : when his last Sickness and Doctors tell him he has not long to live, and that he draws near his End. What Trouble ! what Horror ! what Confusion is he then in ! He casts his Eyes back upon his past Life, spent in Sin and Folly. The many Crimes he has been guilty of tempt him to Despair : The severe and strict Judgment he must soon undergo, makes him sweat with Dread and Apprehension, having so often and long abused the Mercy of God, he cannot find any Grounds to hope in it. Then he is sensible of all the Disorders of his Life past : He makes just Reflections upon Things, but alas ! how much Reason has he to fear these Reflections are made too late ? What Grief and Vexation will he then be in with himself for not doing what he might have done ? How does he regret and condemn his Folly, when too late to retrieve it ? In this Extremity all that ever he heard of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven, come into his Mind to afflict him. This is that dreadful Day. This is that terrible Desolation which will then overtake wilful and impenitent Sinners.

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ners. What Relief? what Assistance in this Time of Distress? Is the Priest sent for to comfort him? What Comfort can the Sight of a Priest be to one who all his Life made a Ridicule of the Sacred Order, contemned their pious Admonitions, and made a Jest of the serious Truths of Religion? The Priest may, without Doubt he will, exhort him to be sorry for his Sins, and to confess them. Alas! poor Creature, he is in such Trouble and Confusion he knows not what to say or do. As for Acts of Devotion, he is altogether unacquainted with them. Does the Priest bid him make Acts of Faith and of Contrition? He knows not how; nor can he raise up his Heart to God, it has been too much set upon the Things of this World, the Separation from which causes the greatest Part of his Trouble and Sorrow. The Priest shews him a Crucifix, and bids him put his Hope in the Merits of the Passion of our Saviour: But to him who has never lived like a Disciple of Jesus Christ, what can he think amidst the bitter Anguish and Horrors of a guilty Conscience? It might be happy for such a Sinner did he make a right Use even of that little Time that he has left; but, alas! the Fright, the Trouble and Confusion he is then in, are great Hindrances to his doing it. In this State the Sinner dies, and dies in a Manner the most unhappy of all. Truly unhappy, because none of his past Pleasures can afford him any Comfort. They only
serve

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serve to increase his Misery, who thus dying in Sin, by Death enters upon a more miserable Eternity. All this is said not to discourage a dying Sinner, or to invalidate a Death-bed, when sincere, Repentance. But to shew Sinners their extream Folly in running so great a Hazard of dying in those Sins they wilfully chuse to live in. God is infinitely good, and has declared that at what Time soever a Sinner shall be converted he shall save his Soul and live: Nor can any one be too late converted, that is sincerely converted. Yet, he told the obstinate *Jews*, that they should seek him, and not find him; and that they should die in their Sins, *St. John* viii. Has not every obstinate and wilful Sinner just Reason to fear that this will be his Case, while trusting to a supposed Death-bed Repentance, he may not have Time to repent, or may not repent sincerely, and as he ought?

This certainly deserves the serious Consideration of every Sinner, and to work upon such is now proposed by the Church from the Gospel of this *Sunday*, which is the last after *Pentecost*, or before the solemn Season of *Advent*, on the first *Sunday* of which will be laid before us the Terrors of that last and dreadful Day of general Judgment, in which the whole World shall appear before God's great and awful Tribunal, and where every one shall be judged, approved or condemned, according as they have lived and died. Happy those who are
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so wise as to make a right Use of the favourable Opportunities which are now afforded them, and of the Time which is mercifully allowed for that Purpose. All such will find the Hour of their Death, and the Coming of Christ to be a Day of Comfort and Joy, wherein they shall receive the Recompence of the Care they have taken to prepare themselves by a virtuous Life for it; and will be happily freed from all that Horror and Dread with which obstinate and impenitent Sinners will be overwhelmed at the Hour of Death and in the Day of Judgment.

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A S P I R A T I O N S.

O sad Conclusion of worldly Pleasures ! Sad End of an unfortunate Sinner ! Ah, my Soul ! how melancholy ! how afflicting it must be to go out of the World in this Manner ! O my God ! Is there any Thing in this World for the Purchase of which I can be content to suffer all this Horror and Confusion at my last Hour ? No surely. The whole World, every Thing in it must be too dearly bought, if this is the Price of them.

O my God ! O God of my Life ! let me not fall into this sad Calamity. O let me not die the Death of a Sinner. When the Time shall come that I must die, receive me into thy Protection at my last Hour. Imprint, dear Lord, this serious Truth deep in my Mind, that to die well and happily, I must love and serve thee. Make me constantly to remember that a good Death is the Consequence of a good Life, and an evil Death that of an evil and sinful Life.

O my dear Saviour and Redeemer ! thou kindly forewarnest us of these Truths, that they may make a due Impression on our Hearts, that we may provide against the evil Day, and find Mercy at thy Hands, when thou shalt come to exercise Judgment and Justice upon Sinners. I adore thy Goodness, and thy Bounty. Let me never abuse it by estranging myself from thee to follow a vain and sinful
World.

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World. O may I from this Moment adhere to thee only, may I love thee most ardently, and serve thee most faithfully to the last Moment of my Life.

Have I not Reason, dear Lord ! to love thee ? How ought I to admire thy Bounty and thy Patience, who hast so long bore with me ? Shall I be always deaf to thy sweet and gracious Calls ? I will open my Ears to hear thee. I will bend my stubborn Will to obey thee, and may my Heart be filled with the pure Love of thee. O my God ! I desire to love thee above all Things, and all other Things only in thee and for thee. O that every Moment of my Life may be spent in thy holy Service, and every Respiration by which I breathe, may it be a most pure Act of Love of thee. In my last Moments may I expire in thy Love, and be for ever happy with thee. Amen, Amen, O my God and my All, Amen.

Soli DEO Honor & Gloria.



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